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SYMPATHY IN SAINTS' LIVES.

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SYMPATHY

IN

SAINTS' LIVES:

(EVENINGS WITH THE SAINTS).

BY

W. H. ANDERDON, S.J.,

Author of "Afternoons with the Saints," "Fasti Apostolici," etc. etc.

MANE NOBISCUM, QUONIAM ADVESPERASCIT.

LONDON: BURNS AND OATES, LIMITED.
NEW YORK: CATHOLIC PUBLICATION SOCIETY CO.
1889.

THIS volume, under its original title of *Evenings with the Saints*, received a kindly notice from the Catholic press, which commented on the "sympathetic" character of its contents. Sympathy, it was implied, formed a sort of key-note to the whole. I willingly accept a description which assigns to the little book a character so Christian, and will now transfer it to the title-page; the former title having apparently been too readily confounded with that of the previous volume of *Afternoons*.

Manchester,
Vigil of All Saints 1888.

"Of all visible things, whereby human nature is easily turned to good or to evil, *example* is perhaps the chief. For, even as wax receives its impression from the seal, so does the character of a life from example. And the iniquity that abounds in this our day may result from the increase and multiplication of such as are prominent models of evil. The charity of many grows cold, with even a deathly chill, because so very few are found to manifest in their acts a devotedness that others might follow. Thus a habit of transgression is formed, through the multitude of transgressors. For human weakness is led on, in an astonishing degree, to imitate those whose doings, for good or for evil, habitually come under their observation.

"Always, therefore, has it been worth while to describe the actions of Saints, both of men and women; and to record in writing, as though in their very presence, the examples of such as have passed from the earth. For thus, even as, from the ways of the wicked, mortal men meet at every turn occasions of falling, they may likewise have aids to advance, if by Grace they stand, or to rise again if fallen, from reading or hearing the examples of the Saints."

Contemporary Biographer of Blessed Juliana of Liege
(*Thirteenth Century*).

Rec. 5802

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Whenever in this volume a passage occurs in inverted commas, without reference, the quotation may be assumed to be from Alban Butler, or from Ribadaneira.

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SAINT FULGENTIUS,

BISHOP OF RUSPA, ON THE AFRICAN COAST.

JANUARY 1.

A.D. 533.

THE Church's year begins with the first of those Seven Precious Bloodsheddings, whereby our Lord manifested to us His suffering love. The mystery of His Circumcision was not indeed the commencement of His sufferings. But those first sacrificial drops presaged the outpouring of a gracious source of redemption and benediction that should well forth of His adorable Wounds—the laver of a new birth* for His people. By His Blood they have been ransomed from the slavery of the demon, from the tyranny, the curse, the foulness, of sin. In His Blood they find the precious fountain promised so long before by the prophet; "a fountain open in the house of David, for the washing of the sinners;" † and in that well-spring of ablution, as in a full-flowing Jordan, they have washed, and have been made clean. For "these are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb." ‡

Most fitly, therefore, the Feast of the Circumcision stands at the head of such records of heroic patience as are read in the Saints' lives. For those chronicles are marked with all that is implied and foreshadowed by the ancient ceremony. Those saintly lives bear the stamp of mortification, and they have been spent under the conditions of a special covenant with God. The Saints, in resistance to

* Tit. iii. 5. † Zach. xiii. 1. ‡ Apoc. vii. 14.

evil, in strenuousness for good, in corresponding with grace, in assimilation to the life of Jesus and to the Spirit of God, have drawn strength from the ever-present thought of a redeeming Victim, circumcised first, then crucified. What was their strong desire for martyrdom, but the perception, and the regret, that they "had not resisted unto blood?"* What was the joyful haste that sped them to their "good confession,"† but the interior echo of that Voice: "I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened, until it be accomplished?"‡ And so, of the long lives of endurance, and continued self-crucifixion, of those among them who were not called to martyrdom; the Cross of Christ, and the Divine Blood shed upon it, interpret them all. It was one life-long cry: "My Love is crucified." "With Christ I am nailed to the Cross."§

S. Fulgentius, who opens the annual round of the lives of God's Saints, was not thus cut off by the sword of martyrdom. But his life was rendered painful, in many ways, by the hatred, opposition, aye, and active persecution, of that heresy which began to corrupt men's minds, when Christian blood had ceased to flow.

Heresy was Satan's second device against our Lord. He became weary of exciting savage criminals to send their innocent neighbours to Heaven; his demon-intelligence awoke to the fact, that this was a very shortsighted policy. It was but adding, and that rapidly, to the number of the blessed. Ten bitter persecutions, through nearly three centuries, had mown down their bodies by myriads, and in the same proportion had opened wide for their happy spirits the gate of eternal glory. Moreover, the blood of the martyrs had become the seed of the Church; the harvest sprang up all the wider and stronger for being thus fertilized. The enemy therefore ceased to hurl against Jerusalem his weapons of bloodshed, and began to undermine the foundations, by deadly misbelief. He cast about to find

* Heb. xiii. 4.

† 1 Tim. vi. 13.

‡ S. Luke xii. 50. And so wrote S. Ignatius of Antioch, on his way to martyrdom: "My Love is crucified; and the waters of baptism, stirring within me cry: 'Come hither to the Father!'"

§ Gal. ii. 9.

some special agent through whom to corrupt the Faith; some man of gifts, of eloquence, and of obstinate will. He found him in Arius.

"How small a difference," Arius would have said, "between my followers, and you Catholics—a mere iota!* *Homo-ousion* or *homoi-ousion;* is this one little *i* to divide Christians, who all believe the Gospels? You are standing stiffly against us, for a dot! I acknowledge that Christ, our common Master, is of an essence most like to God's own essence, of all who are inferior to God Himself. He is, by nature and substance, above Angels and Archangels, above Cherubim and Seraphim. He is "the first-born among many brethren;" "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature;" "the head of the body, the Church, the beginning, the first-born from the dead."† He is nearest to the Eternal Throne. Within these limits, state His glories and pre-eminence as strongly as you will, and I am with you. I will even go so far as to acknowledge Him divine, in a sense; that is, divine, with a slight difference—godlike, certainly. Will you not accept such a profession of faith? Does not this content you? Why, then, you must be narrow and bigoted indeed; it is not I, but yourselves, with the Roman Pontiff at the head of you, at whose door the schism must be laid. I wash my hands of it."

Language of subtle deceit! All the more fatally so, because Arius was only inaugurating it for times to come. Others, by tens of thousands, were to take up the deluding statement. Others, down to this nineteenth century, and throughout whatever future may lead to the world's final doom, would say the same thing. Sometimes it was to be

* This was afterwards Gibbon's sneer; a specious but lying witticism. *Homo-ousion* is the definition by which the Church, assembled at Nicæa, proclaimed the Consubstantiality of the Eternal Son. Arius professed his willingness to accept the term, if only the Church would consent to add the letter *i* (*iota*), making it *Homoiousion*, "of like Substance;" thus denying to our Lord the attribute of true Deity.

† Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 15, 18. The fact that Arius like all other false teachers, appealed to the letter of the Sacred Scriptures, and founded his doctrine upon his interpretation of it, is a proof how essential to the maintenance of Divine truth is an infallible Church, expounding the written word of God.

about this doctrine, then again about the other, contained in the "good deposit" of the faith. Always the same charge against the Spouse of our Lord. Always this: You shake us off, for a non-essential. We have Scripture on our side, and you meet us by tradition; we have a rational belief and worship, you have superstition, mummery, imposture; we are national, you are foreigners; we stand ready for a comprehensive unity, you cast us off, you hold aloof from us, in a spirit of narrow intolerant schism."

An iota? Yes; between the two words there was but a jot, a tittle. But between the two assertions conveyed by those words, there lay all the difference between God's perfect revelation, and man's diminution * and deterioration of it. Here was the great gulf "fixed between us and you." † Here was the touchstone, to discern between the precious and the vile. Do you confess the Homoöusion—that He who lay in the arms of His Mother, and who bled on Calvary, is "God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, Begotten, not made, of One Substance with the Father?" Then you believe as the Church, His Spouse, believes and proclaims. But do you insert your iota? Then have you dishonoured and apostatized from "the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." ‡

However, to maintain this *iota* of their invention, the Arians knew how to persecute. Nothing is more intolerant than the so-called liberalism of a false belief. If you will assent to its professors and their teachings, you are an advanced, enlightened spirit. If you chance to know the better thing which God has taught, you must take the consequences of that knowledge, as far as those theorists can get the upper hand. §

S. Fulgentius came of a noble Carthaginian family, once of senatorian rank. But they were Catholics; while Carthage, for some thirty years before his birth, had been

* Ps. xi. 2. *Diminutæ sunt veritates a filiis hominum.*

† S. Luke xvi. 26.

‡ Apoc. xxii. 13.

§ A leading professor of the Agnostic school, not so long ago, declared his conviction that "undenominational" education ought to be enforced in Ireland, even by coercion.

in the hands of the Arian Vandals. Most of the Catholic bishops were expelled, by King Huneric; and the Saint's father had been deprived of his house in Carthage, which was given over to the Arian priests. He therefore retired to a city named Telepte, and here S. Fulgentius was born in 468.

It was just eight years before the extinction of the Roman Empire in 476, by the dethronement of Augustulus. Rome, the immaculate City of the Faith, had ever guarded that sacred deposit, even as when S. Paul declared that the faith of the Roman Christians was "spoken of in the whole world." Heresy never could creep round that Chair that was set by God's own Hand, to repress it by authority of His Vicar. But in Carthage, Rome's ancient enemy, and in Byzantium, her present rival, Arianism was rampant; and the secular arm was extended over it with protection and favour.

Mariana, the mother of Fulgentius, being left a young widow, devoted herself to the Christian training of her two sons. Fulgentius, the elder son, amply responded to her pious care. He spoke Greek like a native, and then applied himself to Latin, and other branches of literature. Moreover, he soon began to undertake the regulation of the household. Growing years brought him to wider responsibilities; he became procurator, or lieutenant-governor, and general receiver of the taxes, of Byzacena, the province of which Telepte was the capital. So far, a prosperous worldly career seemed opening before the young man. But he looked higher, to that which the world can neither give nor take away. Prayer and fasting were sustained by the pious reading to which he now devoted himself. Among other books which he seems to have found in the monasteries of Telepte, or the neighbourhood, he lit on a sermon of S. Augustine's, who had passed to his great reward just sixty years before, and whose name was diffused, as a good odour of Christ, through the northern coast of Africa.

S. Augustine, like S. Ignatius of Loyola, had greatly owed his own conversion to good reading. He has recorded it in his *Confessions*. Once, when a young man, in almost despair of finding the true happiness his soul yearned for, in the attainment of something above himself that should be

worthy of his love, he reclined in the garden of his house, in a quiet hour. Not yet baptized, he had fallen, both into sin, and into the Manichæan heresy. Though the Scriptures were not unknown to him, for a scroll containing a portion of them lay beside him, neither belief nor life were in harmony with their inspired truths. Suddenly, he heard the clear voice of a child, intoning the words of some song; or an angel had taken that form, to convey to him a message from the God whom he so little knew. The words came to him, once and again:

Take up and read—take up and read!

Struck by this apparent answer to his questionings, Augustine seized the scroll, unrolled it, and came to the words:

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." *

A fitting reparation it was to the truths he had denied, and to the claims of that holy law he had not practised as a catechumen, that Augustine, now bishop, Saint, doctor of the Church, should leave behind him such persuasive words, as others, in turn, might "take up and read." So it came to pass. In the *scrinium*, or book-case, of an African monastery, Fulgentius came upon a sermon † by the great Bishop of Hippo, showing how deceitful was the world, and how short the life of man. The words sank into his heart, and wrought in him a strong desire to embrace the monastic state.

He sought a Catholic bishop named Faustus, who had been driven from his diocese by Huneric, and had built a monastery in the province of Byzacena. To him Fulgentius urged his humble petition. Faustus, perhaps suspecting this newborn desire to be a mere passing impulse, at first discouraged him. The same treatment has been given, since then, in similar cases; sometimes with wholesome result, sometimes (one would think) to permanent evil. A deep-rooted tree may bear the rough wind that tears up the sapling. Surely, the very wish to do what is

* Rom. xiii. 13, 14. † S. Aug. Serm. in Ps. xxxvi.

so point-blank against mere flesh and blood, as to enter religion, may be pre-supposed to be a movement from the good spirit. And, when not a wish only, but a practical intention, has moved the applicant to the very threshold, it would require some plain indication the other way to make one forbear to foster the pious purpose.

Fulgentius persevered in his demand, and was finally admitted by Faustus as a postulant, in his twenty-second year.

Tidings that the youthful governor had embraced the monastic life, spread far and wide through the province; and in the long run, many were induced to follow his example. The greatest trial he had to endure was the passionate, tearful intreaty of his widowed mother; just as, eleven centuries after, the motherly heart of St. Frances Chantal was torn, on entering religion, by the grief of her disconsolate and only son. But when God calls, whether it be Abram, Fulgentius, or Frances, whether the call is given in Mesopotamia, Africa, or Burgundy, the person so favoured has to go forth out of his country, and from his kindred, and out of his father's house *—on peril of forfeiting his final acceptance. And as the baroness de Chantal stepped over her son's body, when he laid himself on the threshold, so now Fulgentius heard his mother's wailings, for days, outside the monastery gate; and, though greatly moved, was not to be shaken.

In his new life, his mortifications brought on him a dangerous illness; yet, on recovering, he pursued them without abatement. He had "put on the new man;" and, having thereby put his hand to the plough, looked not back on what he had left behind.

The Arians now began to persecute afresh; the community was dispersed, and Fulgentius, having obtained all due permission, found himself in another monastery, under the abbot Felix. This holy old man soon perceived the spiritual excellence of the new comer, and was urgent to resign the abbacy in his favour. Fulgentius wholly resisted this; but was at last prevailed upon to execute the office conjointly with Felix. For six years, the two abbots occupied this strange and seemingly anomalous position.

* Gen. xii. 1.

It was one which a perfect humility and abnegation of self on the part of both, could alone render possible.

The last year of the fifth century was now come; and with it came down a swarm of savage Numidian invaders from the interior of Africa. Christianity occupied merely a fringe of territory on the northern coast, until you came eastward to Egypt. There, indeed, in the old land once given up to a long hereditary idol-worship, to the *cultus* of cats, and leeks, and the consecrated ibis, you found yourself amid a very energetic, and ascetic Christian life. But these Numidians were probably votaries of some such dark diabolical superstition as passed on to their descendants, and so went across the Atlantic to our West-Indian plantations, under the names of *fetish* and *oboe*. Anyhow, it was urgent upon the two abbots to flee before the invaders; and they came into the proconsular province of Africa, to a city called Sicca. But this was like avoiding the rock to fall into the whirlpool; for, if they escaped the heathen invader, they encountered the misbelieving Arian inhabitants instead. In the one case, the Name of our Lord would of itself have brought them under persecution; in the other and actual case, it was His true title, the Homoöusion.

An Arian priest caused the two Catholic abbots to be seized, and scourged for their faith. Felix, as the executioners first laid hold on Fulgentius, cried: "Spare my poor brother, whose delicate constitution cannot bear your torments; let them be *my* portion, for I am robust of frame." He endured the stripes with cheerful fortitude. Fulgentius, in his turn, bore the lashes with great patience, though his sufferings were extreme.

Here occurs one of those touches of nature, which are encouraging in the lives of the Saints, who might otherwise seem hardly to be sharers of our flesh and blood. S. Laurence, for example, was so consumed with the fire of divine love, that it appeared to deprive of their heat the bars that externally grilled his limbs. "This side is done enough," he laughs with an unboastful heroism to the persecuting judge; "now turn me on the other." Is it a man like ourselves, who thus speaks? Is it a being compacted of nerves, each of them sending to the brain its swift thrill of agony?

"Let every spirit praise the Lord," who triumphed in Laurence, the young deacon, who triumphed, diversely, in Fulgentius, the young abbot. Butler reports, from the Saint's life, written by a monk, his companion, that

"Feeling the pain excessive, that he might gain a little respite, and recruit his spirits, he requested his judge [the Arian priest, apparently] to give ear to something he had to impart to him. The executioners thereupon being commanded to desist, he began to entertain him with an account of his travels. This savage monster expected nothing more than some overtures to be proposed to him of an intention to yield; but finding himself disappointed, in the utmost rage ordered his torments to be redoubled. At length, having glutted his barbarity, the confessors were dismissed, their clothes rent, their bodies inhumanly torn, and their beards and hair plucked off."

So much for the Arian *iota*. It was a very energetic little dot, that could arm its professor with the scourge, and harden his heart against the common feelings of humanity. But such has always been the intolerance of error; and Arianism did not stop at scourging, by any means. Its annals, during the early centuries, have been copiously written in blood, when blood was within reach of its hand. Meanwhile, the sequel of the story is a very edifying account of Catholic forgiveness.

"The very Arians were ashamed of such cruelty; and their bishop offered to banish the priest, if Fulgentius would but undertake the prosecution. His answer was, that a Christian is never allowed to seek revenge; and, for their parts, it was incumbent on them not to lose the advantage of patience, and the blessings accruing from the forgiving of injuries."

Fulgentius afterwards desired to visit the solitaries of Egypt, and learn from them lessons of Christian perfection. But, alas, solitude and austerities had not preserved those monks and hermits from the private judgment that comes of self-love. His ship touched at Syracuse, where an abbot, S. Eulalius, dissuaded him from prosecuting his voyage, forasmuch as the country was "severed from the communion of Peter." * He therefore embarked for

* *A communione Petri perfida dissentio separavit* (Vit. S. Fulg. c. 12).

Rome, and offered up his prayers at the tombs of the Apostles.

On his return to Africa, many places, whose sees were kept vacant by Thrasimund the Arian King, sought him for their bishop. Struck with that dread of the episcopal charge, which is to be noted in so many Saints, he lay hid in a cell by the sea-shore. When the danger seemed over, he came forth; and was at once seized, and forcibly consecrated bishop of Ruspa, in the present district of Tunis. This was in the year 508.

His episcopate was characterized by great self-austerity, and the continued persecution by the Arians. Indeed, his elevation only made him a more conspicuous mark for their hatred. One of his first episcopal acts was to begin a monastery near his own house at Ruspa; for he had by no means ceased to be a monk on assuming the mitre. But, before he was well seated in his episcopal chair, Thrasimund banished him, with many other Catholic bishops, to the island of Sardinia. These confessors were sixty in all. As in Germany at this moment, so in Carthage some fourteen hundred years ago. Persecution aimed its assaults against the pastors and the religious Orders; for every enemy first encounters the van of the opposite host. Bismarck or Thrasimund—the name may vary, the policy is one. Keep a see vacant; divorce a parish priest and his spiritual bride—the souls entrusted to him—you have struck a blow at the root of religion. Like a wounded tree, in no long time it will dry up.

In his Sardinian exile, Fulgentius, though youngest of his brethren the banished prelates, became their special adviser, as well as the advocate of the Catholic cause for all Africa. But, while his abilities rendered him thus prominent, they were accompanied by a humility and self-concealment no less remarkable.

The bishops were sustained in their afflictions by the common Father of all, Pope Symmachus, who sent them substantial aid, and encouraged them by a letter, still extant. He sends them relics of SS. Nazarius and Romanus, "that the example and patronage of these generous soldiers of Christ, might animate the confessors to fight valiantly the battles of the Lord."

The bishop of Ruspa now employed himself in composing various treatises in defence of the Faith, and letters of spiritual advice to those who consulted him. Thrasimund, hearing of his high repute as an expositor of dogma and controversy, bade him return to Carthage, and required him to answer some Arian propositions. The Saint complied, by a writing which is supposed to be his book, entitled: *An Answer to Ten Objections.* Later on, he replied to fresh questions by his *Three Books to King Thrasimund.* His preaching effected so many conversions, that the Arian bishops clamoured to have him sent back into exile; which was accordingly done. At Cagliari in Sardinia, to which place he was remanded, S. Fulgentius built a monastery, and seems to have ruled it with great charity and edification. His numerous miracles he concealed to the utmost.

Thrasimund went to his account in 523. Hilderic, his successor, a man of mild character but a weak will, so far inclined to the right side as to sign a decree for the liberation of the exiled bishops. This was done before he came to the throne; and he then took an oath to the dying Thrasimund, never to restore the Catholics to their rights. So inconsistent and unworthy are the acts of a man who halts between two sides. For Hilderic seems to have had at least the preludes of faith.

The shore at Carthage was alive with rejoicing multitudes, when the vessel hove in sight with the returning prelates on board; and the bursts of glad welcome were especially vehement when Fulgentius was seen on the deck. He hastened to his own church at Ruspa; and at once set himself to redress some abuses that had taken root during his enforced absence. Here was ample scope for that sweetness and self-forgetting humility which entered so largely into his character. In his heart he nourished the great truth, that finds expression in a common saying, that you may draw men all round the world with a skein of silk, when you cannot drive them a yard. His reforms were therefore a complete success.

S. Fulgentius carried out the Apostle's injunction to his disciple, S. Timothy: "Preach the word: be instant, in season, out of season; reprove, intreat, rebuke in all

patience and doctrine." * For this function of a Bishop's office he had a peculiar fitness. It is related that Bonifacius, Archbishop of Carthage, never heard him preach without watering the ground with his tears, and thanking God for having given so great a pastor to His Church.

Men of even the most meritorious lives have been careful, as far as they might, to secure some time of retirement and leisure before their death, to prepare their souls for the final and decisive launch into eternity. About a year before the happy departure of Fulgentius, he secretly left his diocese, and retired to a small island, or rather rock, on the African coast. Here he prepared for death with extraordinary fervour. Charity for his beloved flock drew him back, however, to Ruspa once more; and there, after a painful illness of seventy days, borne with a patience that equalled his zeal, and was derived from his constant union with God, he breathed forth his soul, on the first day of the year 533, in the sixty-fifth year of his age. In 714, his relics were translated to Bourges in France, and were still there when Alban Butler wrote, almost eleven hundred years after the translation. Whether they survived the displacement of Faith, Hope, and Charity by Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, some other annalist must tell.

COLLECT.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the feast of Blessed Fulgentius, Thy confessor and pontiff, which we reverently celebrate, may increase our devotion and promote our salvation. Through our Lord.

* 2 Tim. iv. 2.

SAINT TELEMACHUS,

HERMIT AND MARTYR.

JANUARY 1.

A.D. 404.

In a solitary cell, somewhere in the East, lived a recluse named Telemachus, occupied day and night with the work of his salvation. He had a great zeal also for the salvation of others; or he would have been a Saint in no possible sense of the term. "No one," it has been truly said, "goes alone, either into Heaven or Hell." In this way, man was not created to be alone. If he is solitary, as Telemachus was, in the outward surroundings of his life, let him take care that this comes by some clear indication of God's most holy Will; let him beware lest solitude shut up his heart from others, concentrate his thoughts and interests merely upon himself, make him cease to yearn and pray for his neighbour's best, eternal welfare.

The great moral teacher of the Greek world lays it down that he who is solitary, by his own free choice, is either more or less than man.* He cannot remain self-poised, as the iron coffin of Mahomet was said to be poised in the cave of Mecca, equi-distant from the strong magnet of the roof, and the equally strong magnet of the floor. Man must rise to more intimate union with God, and thus acquire great intercessory power for others; or he must sink into an absorbed selfishness, and lose the power of praying well for himself, and for others too.

* Arist. Eth. Nicom.

How can any one either gain or preserve a true interest in those whom he has never seen, nor ever will see, till the Day of Judgment? He can see them by faith, the eye of the soul. Faith kindles and keeps alive a strong practical interest in other people's well-doing, especially their spiritual well-doing. Our sympathy with the holy suffering souls in purgatory, for instance, teaches us to divide them into classes, and to take, now one, now another; praying to-day for the soul most destitute of help; to-morrow for the soul richest in merit; and so on. In a like way, it would be no bad thing to classify the needs of the living. This is what S. Telemachus appears to have done.

His mind often turned to Rome—then, in some ways, and in some ways only, converted into Christian Rome. The Eternal City set the fashion to the world; and whatever remains of pagan corruption still found a place there, was sure to be reproduced in the provinces of the Empire. People are always glad to find some countenance to their sins, peccadilloes, follies, in high places. An evil king produces an evil court, and an ever-extending atmosphere of harm. And so, the mistress of the world, who had been the corrupter of nations in her pagan days, still remained a great power for evil, if in any way her new-fledged Christianity were found wavering, inconsistent, insecure.

Among other deeply rooted corruptions, and foremost, perhaps, of all, the shows and bloodshed of the gladiators still went on in the amphitheatres of Christian Rome. These unhappy captives, or slaves, were chiefly from the northern barbarous races, who, were, very soon afterwards, to wreak such vengeance on Rome itself. Meanwhile, baptized Romans crowded into the Coliseum, to see them die by each other's hand. There was the gladiator, with sword and heavy shield and helmet; encumbered, too, by greaves and cuirass. He was opposed by a light-armed adversary, with a net spread over his left shoulder, and armed with a trident, or three-pronged spear. This man's object was to entangle his more athletic antagonist in his net, and then, with his ready spear, to strike him dead:

"Butcher'd, to make a Roman holiday."

And all this took place amid the savage shouts and yells

of some hundred thousand spectators,* the greater part of whom, in their baptism, had "renounced the devil, and all his works, and all his pomps!"

It was this horrible sanguinary remnant of paganism, in the very heart of Christian Rome, that engaged the shuddering thoughts, and animated the prayers, of S. Telemachus in his far Eastern cell.

Special vocations have ever been sent from Heaven to this or that individual among God's servants, to do His work in a given direction. Such vocations have been life-long, or for a time. With Telemachus, the vocation he felt ever growing within him, to put down the Roman games, was life-long, when it once began: for it was to end only with his life—nay, to end it.

Put down the games? Why, to all human reckoning, you might as well expect some shy, retiring student to close his book, and undertake a voyage into Spain, to put down the bull-fights!

And so the student might, more than probably, if he had single-hearted devotion to carry his life in his hand, like S. Telemachus. Only that bull-fights, however barbarous and unworthy of a civilized nation, are not to be compared with unchristian contests, where the blood of man must of necessity be shed, and where none, whether slayers or slain, can engage without mortal guilt. It was the murderous human slaughters in that arena, over which the hermit mourned with a constant passionate sorrow.

This burning fire, "shut up in his bones,"† at length became a motive power, and drove him westward. We cannot tell the length of his journey to the great mother-City, nor the exact course of it; how much by land, how much by sea; what time it occupied; what hardships and perils he endured. Rome—Rome! He scarcely breathed freely, till he caught sight of the distant Capitol. Then he knew—for he could scarce have been ignorant of what his mission implied—that his long travel and his life were to end together.

* The Coliseum, by one account, is said to have afforded seats for ninety thousand, and standing room for twenty thousand men. Maffei (*Verona Illustrata*, p. 4, lib. ii, c. 2) gives 564 feet for the length, 467 for the breadth, and 140 for the height of this amphitheatre.

† Jer. xx. 9.

It was during the winter: for his martyrdom took place with the New Year's Day. We may be sure he did not allow the occasion of the first gladiators' show to elapse without achieving the purpose that brought him.

A stranger in Rome—stranger, perhaps, to its very language, as to its manners and customs—he had to ask his way to the amphitheatre. But he must soon have discerned the huge pile, standing forth in its grand simplicity of design and vastness of proportions, that ranked it, as a masterpiece of architecture, with the pyramids of Egypt. Down in the low ground of the City it lies; before the Via Sacra, the track of so many triumphs, begins to climb towards the Capitol. But its size is such, that it needs no advantage of position to arrest the eye, to impress the mind. Place it on an elevation; it would look in the distance like a small table-mountain. Small as a mountain; huge as an amount of stone blocks, rough-hewn and clamped together, encrusted with pure marble.

Perhaps, before he enters, Telemachus turns into the small oratory, close by, named after S. Clement, the fourth Pope. Here had been Clement's own dwelling-place: here, under his invocation, was constructed one of the most ancient churches in Rome; here, still later, the relics of the martyred Pontiff himself will repose. They are to be brought from the Crimea by S. Cyril, Apostle of Bulgaria, and so many other Sclavonic lands in the ninth century. Also, the relics of that other great saint, Ignatius of Antioch, are not yet here, when Telemachus kneels on the spot. Torn to shreds by the lions in the neighbouring amphitheatre, nothing of him was found, after his glorious combat, but the larger bones. These, S. Chrysostom relates, were gathered up with pious care by the Christian bystanders, and "borne in triumph on the shoulders of all the cities from Rome to Antioch." They are coming back hither, notwithstanding: coming to this oratory, that will then be a basilica; and they will repose beside those of S. Clement, under the high altar. But this will not be until 637, when Antioch shall fall into the hands of the infidel Saracen.*

S. Telemachus, then, was unable to pray before the two

* See F. Mullooly's interesting volume on S. Clement, pp. 80, 81.

great Saints whose relics were one day to sanctify that spot. But he is himself to join the blessed company of those whose mortal remains the Church will honour. If we possessed a particle *ex ossibus S. Telemachi*, it might fitly be carried into some assembly where Christian charity has been replaced by unchristian hatred and strife; and we might plead there for peace, in memory of his noble self-sacrifice.

It is time to go with him inside the Coliseum. He has commended his agony to the God of all grace; and now, on emerging from the oratory, he finds himself swept along with a crowd. Romans, of all classes, are streaming towards the amphitheatre. They hurry onwards, till they reach the vast circumference; then they disappear by twos and threes, by dozens, by scores, within the yawning arches that seem to swallow them up alive, and to wait for more. There is a continuous hum and a stir among the ever-increasing multitude. Evidently, the games are to be of no common interest.

In truth, it is the first day of the new year;—the year of Redemption 404. Therefore (strange consequence to Christian minds!) quite an unusual number of gladiators is to slay and be slain.

Are we still in the days of paganism? Is the conversion of Constantine, and of the Empire with him, a dream? Did the luminous Cross indeed appear in the sky, and marshal to victory against the pagan Maxentius? Is the Christian faith now really dominant in Rome? What, then, means this hideous assertion of Satan's unsubdued power? True it is, one baptized emperor after another, beginning with Constantine himself, had done what he considered to be his utmost to put down this heathen slaughter. But the popular cry was too strong for him. *Panem et circenses!*—"Give us bread, and the games!" That was still to be the imperial largesse to the Roman people, as in days of old—and the people would have it so.

Honorius, who now wears the purple, anxiously forecasts what Rome is drifting to. No thinking mind, indeed, could be without a dread. Symptoms of the great breaking up of an Empire eleven hundred years old, are making themselves felt, like the mutterings and first upheavings of an earthquake. While these insane and heathen spectacles are at

their height, clouds of barbarian hordes are gathering in the North, and threaten the decaying mistress of the world.

Only last year,* Honorius was compelled to withdraw his legions from Britain, and leave the island to its fate. "The groans of the [Roman] Britons" came across the seas and the Alps in vain; the Emperor cannot spare a single soldier from the gates at home. Every sword will be needed, to repel the German, the Goth, the Sarmatian.

Meanwhile, as if to tempt Heaven to anticipate their doom, the descendants of Romulus, and the disciples of S. Peter, seem bent on filling up "the measure of their fathers" by blood and savage exultation, in the huge slaughter-house which they are packing to its utmost on this New Year's Day.

For, when Telemachus made his way in, a scene such as Rome alone could furnish, burst on his view. Not in Verona, not in Pola, not in Arles, not in any other amphitheatre of the Roman world, could be found an assemblage at once so numerous and so splendid. We, who wander among the ruined arches of the Coliseum, find a difficulty in picturing to the imagination what it was in the days of its splendour. The rough massy blocks of travertine, now crumbling and exposed, were overlaid, within and without the building, with white marble. The external walls were adorned with numerous marble statues. Within, the benches went circling round, tier after tier, till they reached a height that was only less imposing than the lateral extent. Nothing met the eye that was not gorgeous and gay, artistic, costly, and luxurious. The cushioned marble, indeed, is at the moment hidden by the splendid array of those who occupy the seats, according to their rank. The stately Senate is there, and the company of Roman knights; matrons, perhaps, in rich attire; all that Rome holds of honoured in society, eminent in literature and art, valorous in war.

One space there is—not empty, for you could not anywhere drop a pin—but filled by others. It is that portion of the magnificent oval sweep, once allotted to the vestals. There they had sat, in their spotless white robes, complacent or excited spectators of the bloodshed; delighted, as ladies in Toledo and Madrid delight to-day, when one animal gores

* A.D. 403.

another; but reserving a very special delight for the moment when two brawny swordsmen, equally matched, had for some time inflicted and sustained ghastly gashes, and when one at last was down. "*Habet!*" "he's got it!" the recognized approval of a palpable hit, then gave place to the still more exciting moment of verdict on the fallen man. Shall he live, or shall he die? The victor bestrides him, as he bleeds apace; lifts his own heavy casque and clears his brow, that he may see the spectators leaning from their seats above. He marks whether they depress* their thumbs in token of mercy, or—fatal sign—hold them up, as ordering the death-stroke. Has the vanquished slave contented the majesty of the people? Has he done well enough for the *lanista*, or tutor of the fatal sword-play, to come in with his attendants and bear him off—roughly, belike—for a chance of healing from his wounds? Or has he faltered, and shown a symptom of the white feather? Has he blundered—the barbarian! has he missed a good stroke? Then up go the thumbs, by scores of thousands; vestals' thumbs included. Down comes the heavy, two-edged blade; and another soul has flitted into eternity.

The vestals are gone; but their place is filled by Christian senators, Christian knights, and, possibly, Christian matrons. The ordeal of the thumbs may also have passed away; it could scarcely have been, that the games still licensed a cold-blooded murder after victory. Nevertheless, like Mercutio's wound, that remained a grave reality, and needed no exaggeration, the deathly gashes, the hellish passions, the murder shared by countless approving spectators—these are enough, and these remain.

It reminds us of the chronicles of some among the kings of Juda, who were not strong or strenuous enough to root out evils that had taken hold of the nation during previous reigns. "The heart of Asa was perfect all his days;" but the high places were left in Israel. Josaphat "walked in the way of his father Asa, and departed not

* It seems a moot point among scholars which of these two signs was for the victim's condemnation. The most natural certainly would be to indicate the death-stroke by depressing the thumb. The best authorities, however, appear to be for the opinion mentioned in the text.

from it, doing the things that were pleasing before the Lord; but yet he took not away the high places, and the people had not yet turned their heart to the Lord the God of their fathers.*

All this looks as if it would last for ever. It has survived the fall of paganism; it is deeply rooted in the popular passions. What shall bring it to an end?

A poor, unarmed man; or armed only with faith, sublime determination, readiness to offer himself an holocaust. A man, aged by austerities, if not by years. He bides his time, on one of the topmost benches, among that expectant throng. Do not look for him among the lower and favoured seats, the "dress circle," that affords the best, because the nearest, view of blood. He is not in the neighbourhood of senators, knights, or stately dames. Seek him away up there, where the poor are grumbling, because, perched so far off, they cannot hope to observe with distinctness the working features and the writhing limbs of men in their death-agony.

He sits there, in his rough garb of an Oriental recluse. After one horrified gaze around and below, he learns from an eager and expectant neighbour, that the silver trumpets of the Prætorian guard will ring out the signal for the gates to be unbarred, on to the arena. On that sign, the first pair of gladiators will advance from opposite sides. This is enough for Telemachus. Not one drop of their blood, he has determined, shall stain the fine, white, carefully-sifted sand of that open space. He closes his eyes, and occupies himself with prayer. It is his last; so we must allow him a moment or two.

Curious looks, meanwhile, are bent upon him; whispered comments go round, according to the dispositions of the observers. "A monk, come to see the games!" "A queer sort of monk, eh?" For people, in proportion as they are bent on their own indulgence, are severely critical of others' coming to share it; and many a man whose life is by no means that of the Church's calendar becomes, for the nonce, a very Cato on what he considers an incongruous diversion in the man next door.

But, hush! There goes the *fanfare* of the trumpets!

* 2 Paralip. xv. 17; xx. 32, 33.

and all the flutter and the small-talk subside at once into a breathing silence. The ladies' tinkling ornaments are still; but let us hope, after all, in the absence of distinct proof, this may be mere fancy, and that none of the gentler portion of humanity are present.

No face among the hundred thousand, but is turned to one or other of these fatal barriers.

They open, heavily. By the one, stalks into the arena the crested warrior with his ponderous armour; yet its weight does not render his firm step less elastic or ready. He is a model of an athlete, that tawny-bearded Dacian from beyond the Danube; his very first appearance elicits a murmur of applause, especially from those who have betted heavily on him. Others, meanwhile, find their favourite in his dark opponent, a lithe and wiry form from Numidia; swart with

> "The shadowed livery of the burnish'd sun,
> To which he is a kinsman, and near bred,"

as, shaking his net loose, brandishing with dexterous skill the cruel, gleaming trident, he advances with light yet wary step, towards the centre of the arena.

Telemachus sprang up in a moment. Now, he thought, was his time!

"Sit down, barbarian!" sternly whispered his neighbour.

"Disturb the games, thou ruffian?" growled the man on his other side.

"Pitch him over!" began to be the general sentiment.

But it was not their rebuke that made the hermit resume his seat. He had been ready to rush down and spring into the arena. Another glance showed him, some preliminaries were still to be observed.

The two victims of savage, half-converted Rome advanced, till they stood within six or seven paces of each other. Then, at a signal from the *lanista*, they faced towards the Imperial "tribune," or stage-box, (if so it may be translated), furnished with soft luxurious cushions, on which the head of the State might recline at ease, and see the slaughtering go on below.

It was vacant. No emperor had graced the games since the Cross was planted on the domes and porticoes of the

Eternal City. Even during the brief revival of paganism under Julian, the spirit of Christianity was sufficiently felt to keep the scandals of the amphitheatre uncrowned by the presence of the Cæsar.

Nevertheless, the ancient custom prevailed: and even as, on board ship, the sailor touches his hat on passing the quarter-deck where the captain *may* be standing, so now, in the arena, the two on whom our eyes are fixed, raise their weapons towards the empty marble of that gemmed and inlaid couch, while they exclaim, with loud, unfaltering voice, each in his barbarian accent:

"Hail, Cæsar, Emperor! They who are going to die, salute thee!"

Then, amid the breathless attention, they face each other, take each other's measure; each endeavouring to read in the eyes of his opponent what first movement he designs. A few snowflakes whisper down from the pure sky, and rest on their shoulders, unheeded.

The heavy-armed bends forward, covering himself up to the eyes with his shield. His muscular right arm is drawn slowly back, each sinew taut, as the fingers grip the massive sword.

But the watchful Numidian is prepared. He can spring aside, like the panther of his native jungle. A moment would fling the net over his adversary; the trident is brandished hither and thither. His backers are confident, and so is himself.

A rush, and a bound!

Not *in* the arena, but down into it. A spare form hurls itself from the topmost benches, descends in rapid flight the sixty or eighty steps from tier to tier, vaults from the high barrier into the open sanded space, darts between the gladiators, spreads out an emaciated arm toward each, and stands there, voiceless, panting.

"In the name of the Crucified, stay!"

This he would have exclaimed; but the exertion has been too much for his frame, worn out by fast and vigil; it has deprived him of the power of speech.

No need of words; his act has answered the purpose of his long travel—saved many lives, won for himself the martyr's crown.

After the first astonishment, one howl of rage rises from the crowded benches. It is the roar of a human volcano, and startles the vultures that are wheeling over the neighbouring plain. The great amphitheatre is seething a savage, maddened, revengeful mob.

"Down with him! down with him!"

It is not thumbs that are now inverted as a sentence of death; this time, the people become both judges and executioners. Every missile that comes to hand; fragments of marble, wherever a bench or a step can be loosened, torn up, hurled below; daggers madly launched into the arena; spectators leaping down, at the risk of their necks; first a score or two, then hundreds at once; a wild surging sea of human forms, pouring itself like a cataract over the barrier, from every part of the vast oval. Senators, knights, artizans, the dregs and scum, crushing and being crushed, trampling and trampled, they converge with mad hate and vengeful disappointment upon the prostrate and now lifeless Telemachus. They spurn him, they tread on him, hale him this way and that; and in less time than the words take to read, they have torn him limb from limb.

But he has accomplished his mission. While among the Angels he sings his first antiphon: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!" the news has reached Honorius in his palace; and the Emperor, determined to seize the occasion, at once forbids these sanguinary spectacles, for evermore. From that day, no gladiator shed his blood in the amphitheatres of the Roman Empire.

COLLECT.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who celebrate the birthday of Thy martyr, blessed Telemachus, may be confirmed by his intercession in the love of Thy Name. Through our Lord.

SAINT GENOVEFA, VIRGIN.

PATRONESS OF PARIS.

JANUARY 3.

A.D. 512.

If we mount one of the towers of Notre Dame, and take a bird's eye view of Paris beneath us and around, the eye will be caught by a gracefully proportioned dome—the dome of a building which has been named, alternately, Pantheon and Church of S. Geneviève. That church has had a singular and eventful history. Its change of name indicates that it has been now in the hands of religion, now in those of a blood-stained atheistic Revolution, with its cultus of foulness and impiety. Fearful deeds that dome has looked down upon. The walls, begun in the middle of the last century, were raised to echo the Church's solemn chants and offices. Scarcely had they risen, when the Reign of Terror seized upon them. Then they were inaugurated by cries of blasphemy, revolting pagan hymns, shouts of fiendish glorification to the apostles of impiety—to men whose corrupt hearts had made them enemies of God and of the human race. On the high-altar, erected as the mercy-seat of an Incarnate Lord, veiled yet present with His people, were placed—it is fearful to range the thoughts side by side—the bones of Voltaire, Rousseau, Marat; dragged from their charnels to intensify the wild triumph of the atheism and corruption which their pens and their lives had promoted.

If the abomination of desolation was thus enthroned in the holy place, no wonder that whatever was holy was at

the same time cast out of it. Forth, therefore, from behind the choir of that desecrated church, the agents of the Constituent Assembly bring a shrine* of precious metals and rich workmanship, powdered with pearls, surmounted with diamonds. That shrine was the gift of a Queen of France and her princely train. The few bones within it—the relics of a poor shepherdess who went to God some thirteen hundred years before—these men carry them to the Place de Grève, the place of public executions, to burn them in that dishonoured spot, in the name of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity! Oh, brotherhood of Cain for Abel!

Who was that shepherdess? How came her mortal remains to be so richly enshrined? And *quare fremuerunt gentes, et populi meditati sunt inania?*—why all this mad fury against her very ashes?

She is hated by God's enemies, and no wonder; they cannot endure that any creature should bear the image and superscription of His work of Grace. That shrine has been made so precious by pious hands, because Paris, in the ages of faith, had experienced the power of her intercession, and the great City had gloried in its patroness. Her prayers had beaten back Attila, and stayed the ravages of a burning pestilence. Genovefa was the humble maiden's name; she had lived and died as one of "the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love Him."† She is a Saint; and this is why they cast her ashes to the four winds. The shrine to the mint; it has its money value. But the bones to the Golgotha! for these, in their philosophy, are vile dust.‡

So ended all that was mortal of Geneviève. We now turn back to contemplate her life, nearer to its beginning.

In the year 429, S. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and St. Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, were on their way into Britain, to stem the heresy of one Morgan, better known under his latinized name, Pelagius. As they passed through Nanterre, the population came out to greet them, and ask their blessing; for the renown of these bishops was great, for

* Appendix A.

† S. James ii. 5.

‡ Vigilantius, in the time of S. Jerome, is quoted by that Father as having held such language regarding the relics of the Saints.

learning and sanctity of life. Amid the throng, the eye, rather let us say the spiritual perception, of Germanus was directed to a child some seven or eight years old, brought thither by her parents, Severus and Gerontia. These were Romans by descent: and it seems singular that they should have given to their little daughter the Gaulish or Keltic name, Genovefa. It was less singular that the meaning of her name should be "Daughter of Heaven;"* for such was she to become, in an eminent degree.

S. Germanus called the little girl to him, and asked the bye-standers about her name and parents. This brought Severus and his wife forward. "Happy are you," he exclaimed, "to be the parents of this child! The hour of her birth was one of rejoicing among the angels in heaven. Her merit will be great before God; and a multitude of sinners, touched by her virtues, will leave their sins, and return to Jesus Christ." Then, addressing her, he asked whether she were willing to live faithful to our Lord, among His consecrated virgins. The child, animated by an inspiration beyond her years, declared such was her desire and prayer.† Then the Bishop took a medal of copper, stamped with a cross, and gave it to her as a memento of her resolution, exhorting her always to wear it, instead of necklace or other vain ornament.

From that time, Genovefa began to lead a life of distinct consecration. Innocence, candour, docility, respect towards her parents, devotion to God, formed her character, more and more. Her father was possessed of a small farm, but was too poor to afford to keep a shepherd for his flock. His little daughter, therefore, was sent to tend the sheep; and, like S. Vincent de Paul, united with that humble employment a spirit of recollection and prayer.

* So interpreted in a French life, taken from the *Femmes Saintes* of Mgr. Darboy. It may be supposed, however, that the first syllable was really *Gwe* (fair, or yellow [haired]) and the name thus allied to Gwendolin, Gwenefrid, Gwenevere. Mr. Ruskin has recently interpreted it to be *White Water;* the "Minne-haha," as it were, of Roman Gaul.

† It was, in fact, the next day, when Geneviève was admitted to the frugal meal of the two bishops. What a *trio* for a picture this would be: the innocent child whom God was then distinctly calling to Himself, and the grey-headed prelates, going forth to do battle against heresy in a foreign land.

Her delight was to assist at Mass and other Divine offices in the church. Soon after S. Germanus had departed on his mission, her mother prepared, one festival day, to go to the parish church at Nanterre, and purposed to leave her child at home. Genovefa pleaded hard, with many tears, to be allowed to accompany her. "I desire, with God's help," she urged, "to keep the pledge I gave to the holy bishop; and I would go to church to merit the honour of belonging to God, according to his words." At length, Gerontia, losing patience at her importunity, struck her on the face: but the Lord's hand immediately avenged His little one, and Gerontia became blind on the spot. This punishment lasted a year and nine months; until the mother, recalling the great things predicted of her child by Germanus, and reflecting how she had withstood the work of grace in Genovefa's soul, was inspired to believe that her cure also would be ministered by her child's hand. She therefore bade her take the bucket, and bring some water from the well. Genovefa hastened thither, shedding abundant tears at the well, to think that her mother's misfortune had come through her means. Gerontia prayed, and then asked her to bless the water with the sign of the Cross. The first time she washed her eyes with it, she began to see a little; and her sight was quite restored when she had done so twice or thrice. The well into which Genovefa dropped those tears of innocent remorse, still exists, and is not without its healing powers for such as apply to it with faith. Both well and house, the site at least of the house where Genovefa was born, were afterwards covered by a chapel, now in ruins, which formed a place of devout pilgrimage in the Middle Ages.

At the age of fifteen, she was admitted to make a solemn dedication of herself to God; and she received the veil of holy religion from the hands of the Bishop of Paris. From that time, her life became one of ascetic severity and continual prayer. After her parents' death, Genovefa removed to Paris, where she lived with a poor woman, who seems to have been her godmother. That city became the special sphere, in which she was to exercise her hallowing influence for the remainder of her life. Had the influence continued after her death, in any appreciable

degree, what might Paris not have become—what might it not have escaped being! A Maid of Orleans was afterwards raised up by the Divine Hand to deliver France from a foreign enemy. Would that the poor maiden of Nanterre could have created a lasting tradition of good, to deliver the City from its domestic enemies:—the frivolity, the love of vain speaking, of dress and light amusements, which are seldom unallied with graver forms of evil. At all events, poor Genovefa was an apostle of purity, humility, Christian simplicity of life, to her own generation.

The power of intercession with God, and of a hallowing influence over man, is often gained at the price of sufferings. So it was here. Genovefa was attacked by a malady which caused her acute pain, and deprived her of the use of her limbs. She lay in a state that differed but little from death. Nor was it only in the body that she was called to suffer. They who have surrendered to their Lord their whole liberty, with all they are and have, are often taken at their word. Their good repute goes, as well as health and wealth, and they find themselves invested with another degree of likeness to Him who on His Cross "was reckoned with the wicked." Especially when the lives of God's servants surpass those who surround them, in austerity, in the spirit of prayer, in communication with Heaven: then are they, therefore are they, maligned. It is an old saying, as true as it is old, that people will not endure others to be better than themselves. They cannot suppose them sincere, in doing more than themselves would have done under the circumstances. To transcend this imaginary line is to be proud, hypocritical, visionary, a compound of fool and knave. Such were the imputations this poor and simple maiden had to undergo, at the hands of those before whom God was holding her up as a model of sanctity.

After a time, she was relieved from such malevolent rumours and suspicions, by the same voice that had originally called her to God.

S. Germanus, with S. Lupus as his companion, had gone (we have seen) by order of the Pope, and with the title of Vicar Apostolic, to quell the Pelagian heresy in Britain. This was in 429; rather more than a century after the Council of Nicæa, and two years before the Council of

Ephesus. At a synod held at Verulam, the holy Bishop, after irresistible arguments and proofs from Scripture, had finally silenced the most obstinate heretics by restoring sight to the blind. The two missionary bishops, when this conference had produced its happy results, paid a visit of devotion to the shrine of S. Alban. S. Germanus caused it to be opened, and placed therein a box of relics of Apostles and Martyrs, taking a little of the dust, which still appeared coloured with S. Alban's blood. This he placed in a church which, on his return to Auxerre, he built in memory of the proto-martyr of Britain. Britain, in turn, dedicated many churches in grateful memory of S. Germanus.* He also gained for the Britons, alike by his prayers and skilful manœuvres, the victory over the Pagan and Saxon Picts, which is known to history as the *Alleluia* victory.† Having thus delivered the objects of his pious care from enemies visible and invisible, he had hastened back to his diocese of Auxerre.

Now, nearly twenty years after his first mission across the British Channel, similar events oblige him to make a second. For heresy is an unquiet and versatile evil, and has a faculty of jointing itself together again, like a scotched snake, and continuing its serpentine life. The Pelagians were making head once more, in this land of ours.

Domine, si adhuc populo tuo sum necessarius, non recuso laborem, has always been the spirit of the Saints whom their Master has called to *do*, as well as to suffer. In a distant portion of the wide vineyard, weeds have grown up again, thick and rank, choking the vines; the wild boar out of the forest ‡ has broken through its fence, trampling and devastating. So, to Britain again, leaving his own people, loth as they were to lose him, even for a time, comes Germanus,§ with the word of truth on his lips, and with the fire of zealous

* Appendix B.

† S. Germanus, in early life, had been a distinguished soldier, like S. Ambrose. The Emperor Honorius made him *dux*, or military commander, over all the troops in his native province in Auxerre. Like S. Ambrose, also, in consequence of a Divine intimation, and even more suddenly and forcibly, he had been compelled to enter the ranks of the clergy, to which he became so bright an ornament.

‡ Psalm lxxx. 14, 15.

§ Appendix C.

charity in his heart. And this brings us back to Paris and to Genovefa.

The city lay on his way from Auxerre to the coast. He would not have turned out of his line of march, merely to pay Paris a visit, any more than the Magi would have lingered in Jerusalem, to see the sights of the place. The path of duty is, to the Saints, straight as one of the Roman roads. And it was probably in the neighbourhood of the *Castellum Parisiorum*,* rather than in the *Castellum* itself, that the Parisians crowded once more, as they and their seniors had crowded twenty years earlier, to greet the Apostolic man, and receive his blessing. While he blessed them, be sure he asked after Genovefa, whom he had blessed before, and had exhorted to a consecrated life. Then she was a child of an age to make her first confession; now, if she lived, she would be a woman verging on thirty. Yes, she lived, he was told; but the opinion of Paris had very much changed about her. She had set up for having visions, and that sort of thing; she had been found in an ecstasy, which they shrewdly suspected to be epilepsy. In a word, the best that could be said about her was, that she was a poor, crazed, and fanciful creature. Meanwhile, the wiser ones shook their heads, and whispered that there was a method in her madness; for their parts, they would be very sincerely glad, only too thankful, if the whole thing did not turn out to be a deep scheme of imposture.

"How *can* you believe," said our Lord on one occasion to the Pharisees, "who receive honour one from another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" There are many who have believed and loved less than before, and in whom grace has waned, in the measure they have been well thought of, and applauded. The fine gold has dimmed and tarnished under the world's breath of praise. Such was not Genovefa's present danger. But one voice was raised powerfully in her defence: that of the holy bishop Germanus. He testified to his intimate

* Paris was one of the strongest fortresses in Roman Gaul. It was included within the island, still called "the City," where the greater and lesser Châtelet remain as memorials of its once fortified character. It was only accessible by two wooden bridges, each of them defended by one of these two *Castella*.

conviction of her worth; and thus, at least for the moment, swayed the popular mind in her favour again, before he went on his way.

Soon, however, the question whether her goodness were genuine or no, was forgotten amid the panic of a very present danger. Attila the Hun, whose self-chosen title was "Scourge of God," was advancing into the very heart of Gaul, followed by a savage force of five hundred thousand untamed horsemen.* His destructive path was lit by the conflagration of towns and villages, and soaked in blood.

Onward they come: it is "a day of clouds and whirlwinds; a numerous and strong people, as the morning spread upon the mountains. . . Before the face thereof, a devouring fire, and behind it a burning flame: the land is like a garden of pleasure before it, and behind it a desolate wilderness: neither is there any one that can escape it. They shall leap like the noise of chariots upon the tops of mountains, like the noise of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, as a strong people prepared to battle."† It was, in truth, an overwhelming locust-swarm of merciless men—all-but demons in human shape.

"They reck not of pity, they dream not of fear."

Cradled in the vast steppes of Tartary, extending westward from China, eastward from Europe; shaggy and wild as their own horses, those houseless freebooters, with no home but the saddle, with no law but their wild impulse of destruction, were in truth a scourge of divine vengeance, wherever they appeared. They harassed the Chinese Empire, till finally blocked out by the Great Wall. Then they pursued their ravages to the West, attacking the Gothic tribes north of the Danube, driving them in, pell-mell, Visigoth and Ostrogoth alike, upon the Roman Empire. They had slain the Emperor Valens, and routed his legions, in a great battle near Adrianople. And now, under Attila, their ferocious chief, whose name in itself was a terror, they have turned bridle, and are swarming full gallop into the Gaulish province, that lay almost defenceless before them.

No wonder that Paris closed its gates in abject terror.

* Some writers say, seven hundred thousand.

† Joel ii. 2—5.

The drawbridges were up, and the warders in the narrow round towers of the Great and Little Châtelet strained their eyes in the direction whence the cloud of dust might betoken the sweep of that human whirlwind. For it was Attila's boast, that where his horse-hoofs trod, the grass never grew again; and had he reached the banks of the Seine, Paris might have been blotted from the face of the earth, and the Franks who were to come thither forty years after, might have remained a savage horde.

Meanwhile, Genovefa was taking her own measures to stay these advancing Huns. For there was One power stronger than Attila; to *Him* she turned. He had once before given victory to the weak, in answer to earnest prayer. Before the walls of Jerusalem, blocked around by a proud military host, He had sent forth His Angel by night, and slain of the Babylonians an hundred four score and four thousand. Will He not turn back an enemy, as well as slay? So Genovefa assembled round her the women of Paris, and became at once the leader of their devotions. They willingly yielded themselves to the energy of her faith; they crowded the churches, and besieged Heaven with their prayers. Not so the men. These, amid all their fears, were exasperated at her zealous efforts. They reproached, they menaced her, and even clamoured for her death.

But what astonishment seized them all, and how their opinion of the poor infirm shepherdess was changed, when tidings came that Attila had retired with his wild troops, and that Gaul was again free! The maiden, in her secluded prayer, had proved well-nigh as powerful as the great S. Leo, with his apostolic zeal and courage, when he afterwards went out to confront that same barbarian, and bade him, in God's name, retire from Rome. As powerful as the heroic leader Aetius, well-named "the last of the Romans," who with his troops and allies followed upon the retreating barbarian, overtook him in the plains of Chalons, and slew a good half of his savage host.

From that day, there was but one sentiment about Genovefa, throughout the Paris she had saved. She was already its *Patroness*.

Notwithstanding her feeble health, her austerities con-

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tinued, and were accompanied by the gift of miracles. The sick and afflicted commended themselves to her prayers, and many of these sufferers she was permitted to heal. And thus, growing and ripening for the kingdom of heaven, she spent year after year of her long life, in active ministrations of charity, in personal devotion to God.*

Another enemy is now at the gates of Paris. Not one to be so much dreaded as Attila, for he is a newly-made Christian; he was baptized on the previous Christmas eve,† and surely, he will not sully his neophyte robe with blood-shed and cruelty? He is come, however, with a very determined purpose to make Paris his own. Like Henry V., at a later day, "he loves France so well, he will not part with a village of it; he will have it all his."‡ Paris, however, was not then in France; it was a fortified island-city in Gaul: the country will not be called by its new name until it comes under the dominion of the man who now sits down before those walls, to besiege the place.

For this is Clovis, son of Childeric, chief of the Sicambrian Franks, the founder of the French nation. He comes of a race whose home was that tract of land, now Schleswig-Holstein, very near the cradle of our own Anglo-Saxon fathers. It is curious to trace up two such different streams to almost the same fountain. They diverged enough, afterwards, and even came rushing, time after time, against each other. Thank God for the *entente cordiale* now existing between them; long may it last!

The date at which the Frank crossed the Rhine, from its western to its eastern bank, and so invaded Gaul, is an epoch in history.§ Not to go into it here, it is enough

* The chronology of S. Geneviève's life is not a little obscure, and the accounts conflicting. However, the sequence of events here given is probably not far from the truth.

† It seems that Clovis commenced the blockade of Paris in 497, the year after he gained the victory of Tolbiac, which was succeeded by his receiving baptism at the hands of S. Remigius. Another account, however, gives 494.

‡ *K. Henry V.* Act. v. Scene 3.

§ It may be assigned to about the year 430; though it was hardly a distinct passage, at a given moment of time, like Cæsar's crossing the Rubicon. The Franks had hovered for a considerable period about both banks of the river, till an excess of population, probably, or the

to return to the siege of Paris, which Clovis is investing, and will take, after no long while. Meanwhile, where is Genovefa? Praying, perhaps, as before, with anxious and tearful women around her? No; there is an active work of charity to be performed. It is not women, but boatmen, in the midst of whom we now find her. The Seine above Paris is still free from the enemy; the blockade is on the other side of the City. With a number of boats, then, she ascends the stream, even as far as Troyes and Arcis-sur-Aube; she returns to Paris with those boats, now laden with provisions for the starving inhabitants. With all her infirm health, the soul triumphs over the body. She is literally the strong woman of Solomon's description. "She is like the merchant's ship, she bringeth her bread from afar." *

What would not S. Vincent de Paul have given, eleven centuries after, to have met with a second Geneviève to aid him in his multiform works of mercy? Himself a keeper of sheep in his youth, until he was called to be a pastor of souls; simple and humble to the end, undazzled by the influential position he was afterwards raised to: a counsellor of princes, a founder of institutions: near to his sovereign's throne, but keeping still nearer to his God—Vincent and Geneviève would have read one another's sanctity at a glance. They see each other now, in the mirror of the Adorable Trinity, and by the light of the Divine Countenance.

But we must not omit to tell how Genovefa, like S. Vincent himself, was brought near to an earthly throne.

The siege is over; Paris has submitted, and Clovis has installed himself there, making it the centre of his new kingdom. But Clovis does not reign alone. His queen Clotildis is by his side; and Clotildis is a great servant of God. Whatever may be thought of this Frankish king's

restlessness of a savage race, induced them to swarm into Gaul, at about the date here given. Few readers are unacquainted with Macaulay's description of the antiquity and unchanged character of the Church—a passage of which the sustained rhetoric (after his manner) has not exaggerated the truth. That institution, he says, was vigorous and flourishing "before the Frank had crossed the Rhine."

* Prov. xxxi. 14.

Christianity, which now and then appears rather thin and elastic, the Church has raised Clotildis to the altar, and honours her among the Saints. These two celebrated women, Genovefa and Clotildis, met in the Paris that owned one of them as its benefactress, the other as its queen. They met, and their hearts were united in our Lord. What a contrast; yet how great a likeness! We picture them together, in our minds, as they are conferring upon some work of charity, or of public beneficence, to be accomplished. Clotildis, forced by the requirements of her position to wear the ermined robes and the glittering tiara; while Genovefa appears in the simple attire that recals the poor shepherdess of Nanterre.

Little could either of those humble souls imagine the day would come, when two of the most beautiful churches in Paris would be dedicated to God under their invocation. No longer the Paris of the little Island,* guarded by its Châtelets, but the great expansive, teeming Paris, whose population was to break out from its narrow cradle, to cross the Seine by bridges on either side, and to flow forth with an onward outward tide of streets, and mansions, and boulevards, till it reached the sweep of the fortifications against which the hereditary foe was to hurl his iron tempest in the Franco-German War. In this great City—to which *La Cité* in its midst has become a relic of antiquarian interest, like the Ludgate and Old Jewry of our own Babylon—were to rise the church of S. Geneviève, with its graceful Roman elevation and conspicuous dome, and the modern and beautiful gothic structure of S. Clotilde's.

Those sacred buildings stand, as a commentary in stone upon the words of Holy Writ, that promise a perpetuity, even on this changeful earth, to the sweet memory of the Saints:

"Their bodies are buried in peace, and their name liveth unto generation and generation. Let the people show forth their wisdom, and the Church declare their praise." †

* Still called *l'Isle de Paris*, with the Châtelet, and the Sainte Chapelle of S. Louis.

† Ecclus. xliv. 14, 15.

It is time now to conduct Genovefa thither, and lay her in that tomb. In spite of her great austerities, she lived for more than eighty years upon earth; then, in 512, she was dissolved, and went to her Lord: "a thing by far the better."* Clovis had preceded her into eternity,† with a very different account to render. Her remains were placed beside those of the Frankish warrior-king, in the church of SS. Peter and Paul, which was afterwards called by her name. Crowds of worshippers used to come and kneel before her sepulchre, invoking her powerful aid for the cure of various maladies, especially of fever. More than six centuries after her death, in 1129 and 1130, during the reign of Louis le Gros, son and successor of Charlemagne, a fearful, burning pestilence devastated France, and especially Paris. It spared neither age, sex, nor condition; its victims were already counted by thousands. Stephen, bishop of Paris, organized a special and solemn invocation of S. Geneviève; and from that moment, the sufferers began to recover. In a few days, its ravages had ceased. This great miracle is attested by documents of the highest authority.

A point or two which we may notice, down the stream of time, reminds us of the antiquity of the period under review, while it shows the constant devotion paid by Paris to its Saint, and by the French monarchs to her who had been the counsellor of Clovis. The church in which she was first laid was probably very small and rude. A wooden fence surrounded her tomb, to keep off the pressure of the crowd, which was ever besieging her for cures. In 620, more than a century after her death, S. Eligius, or Eloi, while he was a pious goldsmith, and before he became bishop, enriched it with ornaments, wrought after the fashion of the time. In 845, the Normans invaded France, and took Paris. The monks, therefore, of the Abbey, which had been founded on the spot and called after her name, exhumed the sacred relics, placed them in a wooden chest, and fled with them to a place of safety. Four

* Phil. i. 23.

† Clovis had been miraculously raised up from sickness by the presence of S. Severinus, abbot of Agaunum in Burgundy, who visited him at the king's own urgent request. Alb. Butler, on Feb. 11.

centuries went by, and then the Abbot of S. Geneviève enclosed them in a magnificent portable shrine. Four centuries more, and in 1614, Mary of Medicis, queen of France, and some of the princesses of her Court, added diamonds and pearls to the shrine of the humble shepherdess. It was a pious act, and the best they could do: but gems and rubies are less than the dust in the balance, weighed against the least infusion of grace, and the least little act of correspondence with grace, in the life of Geneviève.

Shall we come down again, one hundred and eighty years more? We should find ourselves at the date, already referred to, when paganism was rampant, when those relics were burnt, when the pious inscription on the façade of her church, now become the Pantheon, was replaced by words* importing that a grateful country dedicated it to her "great men."

Great men? "Abomination before God!"† Let us not taint, with such reekings from the abyss, the fragrance that is wafted around the name of Geneviève.

COLLECT.

Hear us, O God of our salvation, that, as we rejoice on the festivity of Thy virgin, blessed Genovefa, so we may learn heavenly affections by her devoted piety. Through our Lord.

* *Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante.*

† S. Luke xvi. 15.

SAINT PAUL,

THE FIRST HERMIT.

JANUARY 15.

A.D. 342.

I.

"YOUR life is hid with Christ in God."*

The Christians in Colossæ were not less busy than their neighbours; they were involved in many secular pursuits and cares. Around each of them lay a sphere, a very world, of external interests, that claimed attention, day by day. And not then only, nor in Colossæ, but in every age of Christianity, in almost every place, to almost every person, the same demand has been made by importunate outward things, that would not be denied, could not be postponed. How, then, does the Apostle declare to the Colossians, and, through them, to all who own the faith of Christ, that theirs is a hidden life?

He points to a danger; his words contain not a statement only, but an exhortation too. The danger is described by our Lord's own lips. "Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with the cares of this life; and that Day come upon you suddenly." "The cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires after other things, entering in, choke the word, and it is made fruitless."†

Two ways have always been open for good Christians, to meet this great danger of spending and losing themselves

* Col. iii. 3. † S. Luke xxi. 34; S. Mark iv. 19.

on things around them. One of these ways is the more perfect, demanding a special vocation; the other less so, and within reach of all.

Writing to the Corinthians, S. Paul describes the latter method: "It remaineth, that they also who have wives, be as if they had none . . and they that use this world, as if they used it not."* Aye, the peril of earthly happiness, of success, of honour, station, influence, wealth, of the means and appliances of enjoyment, have been deeply felt by some, at least, of their possessors. We will not ask, by how many, or whether by even a large minority: "for the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind."† But there is Ximenes, whose life as Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo, as Primate and Regent of Spain, was still that of a poor and mortified friar. There is S. Francis Borgia, who as Duke of Gandia and Governor of Catalonia, was reckoned a Saint among princes in the world, till he quitted it for the habit of a humble religious. It is a pleasure also to dwell in thought on S. Edward of England, S. Louis of France, S. Henry of Germany, S. Stephen of Hungary, S. Ferdinand of Arragon, S. Margaret of Scotland.

These head a list, to which others, by Divine mercy, may be added. They have listened to the word: "Be not high-minded, but fear." In God's love and fear, they have worn the royal robes which no whisper from above had bidden them to cast aside; they have swayed the sceptres which it might have been a dereliction of duty to resign. But it was with an awful sense, all the while, that "the mighty," if they misuse their power, "shall be powerfully tormented," and with a steadfast gaze on that great white Throne, before which "the dead, great and small,"‡ are to stand for doom.

"And I show unto you yet a more excellent way." There have been chosen souls in every age, of whom, individually, the Divine Love has said: "Behold I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart."§ These have followed their Lord, despoiled of the soft surroundings, and unencumbered by

* 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. † Wisdom iv. 12.
‡ Apoc. xx. 12. § Osee ii. 14.

"the thick clay,"* wherefrom He has distinctly called them to shake themselves free.

See, for example, that youth, richly clad in secular attire, who has penetrated alone, a fugitive, into the desert of the Thebaid. He is an Egyptian by birth; and, because a Christian also from his birth, he is now forced to flee from the persecution of the Emperor Decius. His sister's husband has cast a covetous eye on his wealthy inheritance, and threatens the young Paul to denounce him to the pagan authorities, unless he buys himself off by submitting to his extortions. Paul is therefore, you might say, driven, rather than "allured," into the wilderness. It is true, that his first object in coming hither is his personal safety. God's ways, however, are not man's ways; and the place of this youth's temporary refuge is to become, for ninety long years, his chosen solitude. Decius and Valerius will go to their account. Persecution will cease, the Empire become Christian; the great Synod assemble at Nicæa: the face of things will change. Still the aged Paul will be fasting, praying, ripening for his heavenly home, in the spot where he now seeks, in the bloom of his youth, but with hasty, fearful steps, a shelter from the storm of the wicked.

He has come into a place untrodden by the foot of man. There is, indeed, no temptation for man to tread so wild and savage a spot. It is probably some distance from the fertile banks of the Nile, with its rich alluvial soil and constant traffic of boats up and down the stream. That would hardly have been a solitude; nay, in those persecuting times it would hardly have been safe. Some zealous pagan might have stayed the youth, wandering there alone, and catechized him as to his belief in Serapis or Jupiter Ammon. Thus, every motive teaches him to penetrate further into the wild. Let us rather say, motives are overruled and directed by that Grace and Love that "reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly."† For it is the Spirit that drives him out into the desert.‡

After much wandering up and down, sustaining his life as best he might, on roots and berries, the young Paul found himself under the shadow of a craggy mountain.

* Hab. ii. 6.

† Wisdom viii. 1. ‡ S. Mark i. 12.

At its base, he discovered a deep cavern* in the rock, half concealed by a large stone. Having removed this stone with some difficulty, he entered, and eagerly explored the interior of the cave. He came to a sort of hall or vestibule, lit from above through a cleft, pierced by the hand of nature in the rock, where the fierce sun of Egypt was tempered, as it glanced in, by the broad leaves of a palm tree that grew in the opening. A rill of pure water tinkled from its rocky bed, and escaped with a quiet shimmering, to lose itself in the sand at no great distance. The place showed traces of having once afforded a refuge and a rude kind of workshop for coiners: indeed, there was a dim tradition of their having been at work here to forge base coin, during the reign of Cleopatra.

II.

Here was the very place for the persecuted youth, who could now hope to cultivate his soul in a safe retreat. This was all he was in search of: why should he seek further? Perhaps he made a distinct resolution to stay, like S. Catherine of Ledbury, who, arriving at that quiet English spot, exclaimed:

Here I set up my rest.

Certain it is, that in this place he remained, to fast and pray, for the best part of a century. More than his great namesake, the Apostle of the Gentiles, he grew to be "Paul an old man;"† his long hair gradually turned white as snow, and his form was emaciated, if not bowed. He lived, a miracle of uninterrupted contemplation; during which

Of God and goodness was his meditation.

The fruit of the palm tree was his scant daily meal; the little rill quenched his thirst; the leaves of the tree, woven by his unskilled hand, formed a kind of tunic of basket-work, when his fine secular clothes fell to pieces. These outward changes were a type of the glorious transformation that was going on, all the while, in the inward man; the building up of the edifice of the soul, course by course, layer upon layer, even as the Pyramids on the distant horizon had been toilfully built up, in unknown centuries.

* Butler says, "many spacious caverns." † Philem. ix.

Great grace that old man to him given had ;
For God he often saw from Heaven's height :
All were his earthly eyne both blunt and bad,
And through great age had lost their kindly* light,
But wondrous quick and piercing was his sprite ;
As eagle's eye, that can behold the sun—
* * * * * *
There do they find that godly aged sire,
With snowy locks adown his shoulders shed ;
As hoary frost with spangles does attire
The mossy branches of an oak half-dead.†

For the first twenty years in this desert, the palm tree yielded him his daily food. It was a twofold miracle ; that life could be sustained on so scant a portion, and that the fruit should prove perennial. After those twenty years, perhaps the tree withered and died : any how, this marvel was succeeded by a greater.

Paul was a solitary, even as the prophet Elias, and with a solitude more protracted : and now, the same Lord who had commanded the ravens ‡ to feed His prophet by the torrent of Carith—to bring him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening—wrought a like miracle for His hermit in Egypt. Every day, for the sixty remaining years of Paul's long life, a raven brought him the half of a small loaf ; the ration, as we shall hear him express it, of a soldier in this spiritual warfare.

Meanwhile, the great world rolled round, with its heavy atmosphere of dulness and care, with its burden of self-inflicted sorrows. There was no thought of Paul the Hermit. None asked, what had become of that young man who had fled long ago, no one knew whither. Some may have inquired ; but they died off by degrees, while Paul lived on, and prayed. The descendants of those Egyptians§ who had been converted in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, fell under cruel persecution from Decius ; their children again, were persecuted as cruelly by Diocle-

* Old English for "natural." It is well to explain this, lest S. Paul's eyes should be thought to have anything but a kindly look, which certainly could not be the case in eyes that were ever gazing into the Unseen.

† *Faery Queene*, Canto x. 47, 48.

‡ 3 Kings xvii. 3—6.

§ Acts ii. 10.

sian. No tidings of it came to the hermit's cave. Yet he may be supposed to have known those sufferings by vision, as S. Patrick heard the cries of the Irish children imploring him to come over and baptize them. Many a strong prayer must Paul have put up, out of his calm safe retreat, that Christian confessors and sufferers all through the Empire might have the grace of steadfastness under their torments.

Then, at length, came the great Imperial conversion; and the Cross glitters triumphant on the Lateran, and on the Vatican, and on the Emperor's crown. The news rings through the world; but it is not re-echoed from the desert. Paul might now leave his solitude; he would be welcomed in Christian Egypt. Yet he stirs not. And why should he? Why leave the place that has grown fragrant with his sighs of heavenly love? "Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called."* There are younger men, and men more explicitly schooled in the science of the Gospel, to carry on the work of conversion and instruction. Paul has been called to stay where he is. Like a greater Saint than himself, who had formerly been called down into this same Egypt from the Holy Land, he had heard the Divine Will intimated to him: *Esto ibi, usque dum dicam tibi.*†

Meanwhile, is he not aiding our Lord's interests as much, or more, by his continual and availing‡ prayer? It is not only the strong arm of Josue and of his combatants in the plain, that overcomes Amalek. The feeble hands of an aged Moses on the mountain can do more; they are nearer to the Mercy-seat. Raised up in supplication, they prevail;§ for, faint and weary all the while, they are nerved by a power above their own. "He giveth strength to the weary, and increaseth force and might to them that are not."‖

So Paul remained in his cave, year after year, alone. Alone with God!—the intolerable dread of His enemies, the burden and constraint of the lukewarm, the ecstasy of His loving children. To speak to the Supreme Father, and to hear Him speak in turn; to gaze upon His uncreated beautifulness, beside which all that is fair and attractive

* 1 Cor. vii. 20. † S. Matt. ii. 13. ‡ S. James v. 16.
§ Exodus xvii. 9—13. ‖ Isaias xl. 29.

below is earth and ashes: to receive into the inmost soul the whispers of His love, dropping like honey, beside which the sweetnesses of this world are gall—this was his absorbing employment. Between him and the eternity awaiting him in the mansions above, there was but the thinnest veil. When he looked his most earnest look forward, he could almost see the radiance of his future home in the Kingdom of his Father.

But all this was not to be had for the dreaming; Paul, therefore, like his namesake the Apostle, so ran for his heavenly crown, not as at an uncertainty, and so fought for it, not as one beating the air. While the flesh was wasted with macerations and with age, the spirit grew brighter for heaven. The broad red sun showed his disk above the mountains eastward of the Nile. "Scarlet shafts of sunrise" slanted-in through the cleft in the cave. They found Paul on those knees of his, hardened like a camel's,* through constant prayer. The sun "rejoiced as a giant to run the way," mounting to his zenith; intolerable to man, though cherishing the lazy slumber of crocodile and unwieldly sea-horse, as they floated and basked on the great stream. He looked down into the quiet cave; there was Paul, unconscious of the passage of time, at mid-day prayer. The sun sloped westward, descending now over the varied expanse of the African desert, gilding the broad full Nile with a dusky gold. Paul was busied with those vespers that were taught him, not by the modulations of the great S. Gregory, but by the spontaneous music of a heart filled with the Holy Ghost. The statue of Memnon was fabled to utter melodious and mystic sounds, when the first ray of sunrise smote his granite lips of Æthiopian mould. But it was the Sun of justice that, first and last, touched the lips of the hermit Paul; and with the "Father of lights there is no change, nor shadow of alteration."†

The only visitor to his solitude noticeable to human eyes, was the daily raven, God's purveyor for the servant of

* It is recorded of S. James by Hegesippus (quoted by S. Jerome and Eusebius), that "he prostrated so much in prayer, that the skin of his knees and forehead was hardened like to the skin of a camel." Southey has used this in his *Thalaba*, where he makes a scoffing unbeliever call the young man a "camel-knee'd prayer-monger."

† S. James i. 17.

God; unless, indeed, the wild beasts of the deserts might now and then cease their prowling to come and fawn at his feet, as they afterwards helped to bury his corpse. That the angels made themselves visible, and conversed with him familiarly, we can hardly doubt.

And now, at length, he drew towards the end. A youth of two-and-twenty, he had entered this solitude; an aged form of a century and thirteen years over, he is to bring his ripened spirit into the eternal garner. The cave will hold him no longer; he is going "into the house of his eternity."* "O blessed man! whose soul possesses Paradise; an exultation to the Angels; a joy to the Archangels; while the choir of the Saints proclaims thee, while the multitude of Virgins invites thee; 'Abide with us for ever!'"†

III.

Meanwhile, a kindred spirit is being drawn to visit him: the first, last, only human visit Paul is known to have had, through that long revolution of time.

S. Antony, the great patriarch of monks who live in community, was also an Egyptian by birth. Darkness had become wonderful light over that old land of mystery. The homes of ancient superstition were teeming with fervent Christians under persecution, and fervent ascetics, when the Empire acknowledged our Lord. Antony was born in Upper Egypt, nearer to the sources of the Nile, in 251. He, too, like Paul, had early retired into solitude, and he had taken up his dwelling in a tomb. There, such trials, temptations, buffetings of the Evil One assaulted him, as needed the Christian heroism of one who had left all for his Master, to endure. But he was rewarded by seeing, at length, the maxims of perfection he taught, devoutly followed by innumerable disciples,‡ and thus the glory of that Master's Name spread abroad and magnified. The story of his life, and his influence over princes and peoples, reads like an improbable romance: but things improbable

* Eccles. xii. 5.

† *Antiph. ad Bened. in fest Sti. Martini Pontif.*

‡ S. Serapion, who seems to have owed him all, was the spiritual father of ten thousand religious in the desert of Arsinoe. Rufinus says those in Babylon and Memphis were without number.

become easy, when men act supernaturally, and work by the Arm of God.

And now, at ninety years of age, Antony has a temptation. The Enemy finds one arrow yet in his quiver. Pleasure, fear, ambition, molestation by demons, spiritual darkness and despair—all have been tried on him in vain: they have been vanquished by the sign of the Cross. But a whisper at length comes to him, that *he*, surely, is the man, of all men, who has mastered those spiritual treasures that are to be found in solitude. By his long years of prayer, fasting, miracles, communion with God—by perpetual instructions given to crowding followers who hung upon his lips, whom he led by example, no less than by precept, along the way of perfection—has he not securely gained the summit?

We know not how far Antony may have lent a half-willing ear to this whisper of spiritual pride. But in the midst of it, he slept; and in a dream it was declared to him, that in the inmost desert dwelt one who exceeded him in perfection. Let him go, seek him out, and learn wisdom from his lips.

No sooner had the light dawned, than the aged Antony, supporting his uncertain footsteps by a staff, set out on his slow and laborious pilgrimage, to seek the hermit, his senior by the quarter of a century. The tracks made by broad paws of lions in the sand, guided him. Men who lived as close to their Creator as did Antony and Paul, feared not those fierce works of His hands that have only become terrible through human sin. The hungry lion has often fawned at the martyr's feet in the arena. And here were martyrs by the life-long crucifixion of self:—men living in God, members of the Second Adam, "partakers of the Divine Nature." Why should not lions acknowledge them, and pay them homage? Why should not the day of Paradise, when the lion and the sheep abode together,* return to these vessels of grace?

For two whole days and a night, Antony continued his pilgrimage. As the third day was breaking, he saw the glimmer of a light afar off. Though now almost spent, he redoubled his exertions, and at length came to the cave of

* Isaias xi. 6.

Paul, to find the rude door of it—barred against him! The solitary had discovered that some one was approaching, and had determined to vindicate his solitude. But Antony was not to be deterred. Prostrate before the entrance, he implored the Saint to open to him. He addressed him with a holy confidence:

"Thou knowest," he said, "who I am, and whence and why I came. I am, indeed, unworthy to behold thy face; but I will not depart, till I have seen thee. Wilt thou reject a brother-man, when thou dost hospitably receive savage beasts? I have sought thee, and found thee, according to the divine word in the Gospel; I knock, that it may be opened to me. If I do not obtain the favour I implore, I will die here before the entrance; at least, thou wilt bury my dead body."

So he prayed, until the sixth hour; still, Paul was not to be moved. At length, the hermit replied from within:

"No one asks a favour by threatening; no one mingles reproaches with tears. Doth it surprise thee that I am unwilling to receive one who comes hither only to die?"

Saying this, he opened the wicket, and received his guest with smiling countenance. The two aged solitaries knew each other's name by an inspired knowledge, and gave and received the kiss of peace. Then the hermit led Antony to a rocky seat by the spring, and there they "spoke together many things concerning the kingdom of God."*

Paul had much to ask. He had not prayed, those countless times, "Thy Kingdom come," without yearning to know more of its developement on earth. Much intelligence as he may be supposed to have received by heavenly communication, there was also much that Antony could tell him—Antony, who himself had left the world more than seventy years ago. For we are in the year 342, as we sit there with them, beside the spring. Constans, son of the first Christian Emperor, is ruling, in the West, a portion of the great Empire, which is now divided, and now Christian. The present danger is not the sword of persecution, but the subtleties of the Arian heresy.

Amid this converse, the cleft in the cave becomes partly

* Lect. iv. in Brev. Rom. Jan. 15.

darkened for a moment, and down flies the raven, holding in his beak a small loaf of bread.

"See," said Paul, turning to his guest, "the Lord has sent us our repast: truly, a Lord benign and merciful. For sixty years have I daily received half such a loaf; now that thou art come, He hath doubled the rations of His soldiers." So, with giving of thanks, they brake their bread, and drank of the spring: then spent the live-long night in the divine praises.

IV.

On the morrow, Paul thus addressed Antony: "Brother, I have long known of thy dwelling in these deserts; and long since, our Lord promised me that I should have thee as my companion.* Now, the hour of my rest is at hand; and I tell thee, the Lord has sent thee hither, to cover my body with its kindred earth."

At these words, Antony, in great desolation, with supplications and tears, besought him still to stay. He has but begun the lesson for which he has come so far: he thirsts to learn yet more of heavenly wisdom at the hermit's feet. Then he changed his prayer, and asked Paul also to pray, that he might die with him. But Paul answered:

"Thy prayer should be, not for what pleases thyself, but for what may profit others. For thyself, indeed, it were good to be freed from this mortal flesh, and to follow the Lamb in glory. For thy brethren, who are to be taught by thy example, it is expedient that thou still abide. Make haste, therefore, I beseech thee; fetch the cloak which the bishop Athanasius left with thee, and bring it hither, to bury my body in."

Not, certainly, that holy Paul had any care for the way in which he should be buried. For himself, he would have been content to lie down, in his palm-woven tunic, and breathe his soul into the hands of his Lord. Had he not been living, for ninety years, a dying life? What was to him, this or the other shroud? But he had two motives, says the pious writer who gives these details. He desired to spare Antony the actual sight of his death. He wished

* Meaning, probably, when he came to die.

also to testify his veneration for the great Athanasius, and his own devoted attachment to the faith of the Church, for which that holy doctor was, at the very time, undergoing fierce persecution from the Arians. It was the homage of contemplative prayer to her twin-sister, active service.

Antony, struck dumb by this revelation of a detail which the hermit could not have known by natural means, no longer doubted that the Divine Will had spoken by his lips. He hastened, therefore, though in much sorrow, to execute the behest. On his long journey back to the place where his monks owned him their spiritual Father, he must have had many struggles, as well as prayers, to be resigned. "Too late have I found thee!" S. Augustine exclaims, when the full majesty and beauty of God's truth burst upon him. The holy Antony mourned the lateness, in his long life, of those heavenly communications. He had been contemplating that truth, and conforming his every day to its precepts, for a life-time. Yet, in the presence of Paul, he had felt as if he had never known it hitherto. For the teaching of the Holy Ghost is interminable, and conducts the soul from Alp to Alp of the spiritual world. There is no satiety, no sense of having had enough, where that Spirit breathes. The more His disciples have, they desire the more. "They that eat Me," says Divine Wisdom, "shall yet hunger, and they that drink Me shall yet thirst." *

So Antony mused and mourned, on that painful homeward journey. What had he not lost, of the soul's treasures he might have accumulated! Yet one effort of resignation was worth them all. He "glorified Him, while he did not his own ways, and his own will was not found, to speak a word." †

Two of his monks hastened to meet him. What news from the inner desert? But Antony had only sighs, and a few interrupted words, to give. "Woe is me, a sinner," he cried, "unworthy to be called a servant of God! I have seen Elias; I have seen the Baptist in the wilderness; aye, I have seen Paul in paradise!" He went to his cell, beating his breast, and followed by his wondering disciples. They crowded round him: But what can it all mean? they

* Ecclus. xxiv. 29. † Isaias lviii. 13.

besought him to say. *Tempus tacendi et tempus loquendi,** was all he would answer; and, without even touching food, he returned on his path to the distant cave, laden with the cloak that once had owned Athanasius for its wearer.

All the way, as he went, he had the presentiment of Eliseus about his great master Elias. He dreaded to find that this day the Lord had taken away his master from him.† His fears were realized. In the midst of his journey, a vision was granted to him. Surrounded by choirs of Angels, by Prophets and Apostles, was the glorified soul of Paul the hermit, beaming in the light inaccessible‡ to mortal man. The radiant company of glad spirits ascended towards heaven. Antony fell prostrate, mourning, and covered his head with sand, in token of his grief. "O Paul!" he exclaimed, "why leave me thus? Why depart without one farewell? So lately known—so early gone!"

He hastens to the cave. Yes, there, in his accustomed spot, where his knees had worn the hard rock by ninety years of prayer, was all that remained on earth of the First Hermit. Kneeling, open-eyed, with head erect, with hands stretched out to heaven, the inanimate body seemed to continue that employment in which body and soul had for so long a time delighted together.

Yet, is he really dead? Could a corpse remain in that position? Antony had still a hope. He placed himself on his knees beside the kneeling body, and looked, and listened. It was only after a while of suspense, that the stillness, the absence of those sighs of love which Paul was wont to direct towards Heaven in his prayers, convinced him that he was gone indeed. One sorrowing reverential embrace of that temple of the Holy Ghost; and then he gives himself to the work of burial.

When our Lord fasted and was tempted for us in the desert, S. Mark records that "He was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to Him."§ So it was with this His eminent servant. Paul had withdrawn himself from the face of man; but angels from heaven, his loving companions, and raging beasts from the wilderness, tamed

* In whatever language he may have quoted the text: "A time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Eccles. iii. 7).

† 4 Kings ii. 3. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 16. § S. Mark i. 13.

and submissive to him, had visited his cave. In measure as man returns to enter deeply into the friendship of his Creator, he becomes friends once more with all the sinless works of His Hand, above him and below. Once and again,* a Syrian lion was commissioned to tear the unfaithful prophet, while he touched him not for food. Now, by some superadded instinct, the Lybian lion could be taught to reverence God's faithful servant. Wild beast, or raven of the air, He uses the works of His hand, at His own good pleasure, on behal of His elect.

So it was now. While Antony doubted within himself, how his feeble strength should avail to dig the grave, behold, two tawny spots upon the waste. They grow larger and larger; they are lions in swift course hither. They reach the cave; they seem to regard the dead with sorrow. Then, with vigorous paws, and a kind of rude leonine moaning, they have soon scooped out a sufficient grave in which to lay the holy body :—and they are gone.

The next day, alone and sorrowful, Antony returned to his monastery, and related in detail all he had seen and heard. Could there have been a more powerful exhortation to the community? The cloak of S. Athanasius had been exchanged for the garment of palm-matting, woven and worn by Paul, which Antony brought back with him. He wore it at the altar, with great reverence, on the high festivals of Easter and Pentecost. Many a cope or chasuble, heavy with gold, stiff with embroidery, has no such memories clinging to it, as that rude garment. For it had clad those limbs that are to arise out of the desert sands, and "shine like the sun" beside the Throne of light. It had veiled the earthly tabernacle of a soul which now, for fifteen centuries or more, has worn the radiance and the "clarity" of the heavenly bliss.

COLLECT.

O God, Who dost gladden us by the yearly celebration of Blessed Paul Thy confessor, mercifully grant that we, who devoutly keep his birthday, may also imitate his actions. Through our Lord.

* 3 Kings xiii. 24; xx. 36.

SAINT MARTINA,

VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

JANUARY 30.

A.D. 228.

THE very Rome of Rome, in pagan times, was the Capitol.

It is no idle association of sounds that derives the name of this commanding rock from *caput*. The Capitol was the *Cephas*, so to say, of the old heathen Empire. It was crowned by the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; the diadem on that sovereign head. Long processions wound up to it, on festive days, or after a victory, along the Via Sacra, to offer sacrifice. The triumphal chariot bearing the proud conqueror, his brows wreathed in laurel; jubilant warriors with their flashing armour; the *spolia opima*, or best of the spoil brought home, and now to be consecrated to the idol; the sacrifices of sheep and oxen, and—alas—captives to be offered as human victims, slain in the precincts of the temple, or thrown down the Tarpeian rock—all these, in one orderly procession, ascended to the Capitol. The way was "sacred" that led up to its summit; for it conducted to the divine seat and centre of that religion, false indeed, and diabolical, yet all the more delusive as it was grave, majestic, imperial.

So truly did the Capitol represent the very genius of Rome, that, long after the idols had fallen before the power of the Cross, one mind, at least, that would have preferred to see a form of idolatry prevail, rather than the faith of Christ, mourned the death of paganism in this its stronghold. The historian Gibbon records that his mind was

powerfully impressed with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, as he mused on the Capitol, and heard the friars in the great Franciscan Church of Ara Cœli chanting their vespers, where once the smoke of incense rose before the image of Jupiter. The sentiment is so shocking, that it seems strange to find even a professed infidel daring to give utterance to it. We might have thought that only a Julian could go so far. Happily, there are Christian hearts that can draw from the same facts a diametrically opposite lesson. They see, in the contrast between Rome Pagan and Christian, "the change of the Right Hand of the Most High." In the wide sway, in the consolidation and centralization of the great Roman power, in the grave, commanding, practical character of the Roman race, they discern the "preparation of the gospel of peace."

So speaks S. Leo's voice, from the very chair of S. Peter. "This City," says the great Pope and Doctor, "unwitting of Him from Whom its [true] advancement was derived, while it ruled over almost every nation, was enslaved to every nation's errors; and held itself to have acquired great religiousness, because there was no falsehood which it rejected. Hence, the faster it was bound by the demon, the more marvellously has it been emancipated by Christ."*

The Christian pilgrim who looks down from the Capitol on the ruins of the Forum, will see many instances of this christianizing of the old waste places† of dead paganism. Two may here be especially noted. There is the prison, called Mamertine, built massively, of large blocks of travertine stone. It dates back to the early days when Rome was a petty kingdom: afterwards it became a consecrated place, by the imprisonment of S. Peter and S. Paul. And a little further off, is the church of S. Martina; standing probably on the site of some heathen temple—for it abuts on the Forum—and rebuilt in its present form by direction of Pope Urban VIII.‡

* S. Leo, Serm. i. in Natal. SS. Pet. et Paul.

† Isaias lviii. 12.

‡ A chapel in Rome, consecrated to the memory of S. Martina, was frequented with great devotion in the time of S. Gregory the Great. In 1236, Alexander IV. dedicated a church in her honour. This seems gradually to have fallen to decay; but the Saint's relics were discovered in a vault amid the ruins, and were translated in 1634, with great pomp,

S. Martina was one of the most eminent martyrs who witnessed for the Faith within the walls of the Eternal City. It is not comparing Saint with Saint, in point of sanctity, if we say, that some of the early martyrs have been more prominently gifted with those endowments called *gratiæ gratis datæ*, than others: power of miracles, command over evil spirits, and other wonder-workings. Thus, even if quite unlettered, or slaves, or, again, weak maidens and timid Christian women, they have exercised an almost apostolical influence over the spectators of their sufferings. Their eloquent chair of teaching has been the equuleus, or rack, as that of our Lord was His Cross.

Now, among these *thaumaturgi* of martyrdom, S. Martina holds a high place. Indeed, were we to single out the especially Roman Saints who are venerated in the City, it would be obvious to name this glorious virgin for a cultus beginning from ancient times, as S. Philip Neri for that of a later day. Her festival, as it comes round, is a high day in Rome. The massive pilasters of the church are robed in crimson hangings, and the crushed bay-leaves are fragrant under the feet of multitudes, who come pressing round the altar-rails, to kiss the sacred relic there offered to their pious homage—the head of the virgin martyr, enclosed in a silver casket.

For if humble, courageous endurance, rising even to the height of apostolic zeal, are ever to win devotion from Christian hearts, then the confession and glorious martyrdom of S. Martina cannot but do so. Her torments were various and protracted; then, again, the authority given to her over the demons of paganism, was unusually great.

It was the fourth year of Alexander Severus, and a long weary century yet, before persecution shall cease on the Empire's becoming Christian. Severus issued an edict, that all the "Galilæans" should either offer sacrifice to the idols, or die the death. Three special commissioners were appointed, to enforce this; and one of their first victims was Martina. The virgin was of noble birth, her father being of consular rank. Her wealth she employed, not in luxury

into the new church, during the pontificate of Urban VIII. The same Pope himself composed the hymns in her honour, which are assigned to the feast of S. Martina in the Roman Breviary.

and ostentation, but in relieving the poor. Besides her secular advantages, she was also a deaconess of the Church; pledged, therefore, by her very consecration, to acts of Christian charity and Christian teaching.

As she was praying near a certain church in Rome, she was seized by these men, who knew her to be a Christian.

Her first trial, however, demanded fortitude, not to resist the impressions of fear, but to withstand what so many would reckon the smiles of fortune. Her captors addressed the noble maiden with flattering words on the part of the Emperor, who, knowing her eminent birth, had heard also of her qualities and honourable life. He expressed his wish that she would voluntarily offer sacrifice to Apollo: probably his emissaries also hinted, what Severus more distinctly expressed when she was brought before him, that he designed to raise her to the imperial throne.

Martina, it is likely, had some particular inspiration, that Apollo, or rather the Apollyon* who represented him, was to be engaged by her in personal conflict. She signified her willingness to be led to the temple. Only, she stipulated that first she might be allowed to enter the church, near whose doors this colloquy took place. There she commended herself and her trial to each Person of the Adorable Trinity, then "to the holy Bishop,† to the sacred priests, and the blessed flock of the faithful." After her prayer, she was conducted to the presence of the Emperor, who, after many praises bestowed upon her excellent life, invited her to sacrifice to Apollo. She rejoined that he ought to command her to offer an unbloody Sacrifice‡ to the All-pure God, who made all things out of nothing; in order that, by such oblation, Apollo might not any longer be permitted to ruin souls that had been redeemed by her Lord and Saviour, the King of kings. Severus, not taking

* Apoc. ix. 11.

† Pope S. Urban I. This may have led Urban VIII. fourteen centuries after, to rebuild the church of the martyr who had suffered during the Pontificate of his first namesake on the Chair of Peter.

‡ Inasmuch as a faithful Christian, assisting at Mass, really takes part in the adorable Sacrifice. "Remember, O Lord, all who are here present, for whom we offer, or who offer to Thee this sacrifice of praise, for themselves and all who belong to them," &c. This is the language of the Canon of the Mass, in the Memento for the living.

this answer as an explicit refusal, commanded her to be led into the temple. Here the Saint, after signing herself with the sign of the Cross, "made her prayer to the Father of glory, Jesus Christ, that He would be pleased to hear the petition of His servant, a poor sinner, and break in pieces that blind and dumb idol, which by hidden malice wrought the perdition of those that put their trust in it."

Let us follow the quaint old English version of Ribadaneira, from which the foregoing details have come to us; modernising him now and then, where the original is not quaint only, but rather grotesque.

"Whilst she was praying, by a sudden earthquake the whole City was shaken, the blackish idol of Apollo was broken in pieces, a fourth part of his temple thrown down, and with its ruins were crushed to death his priests and many others, whom the Emperor had sent with S. Martina, to be witnesses of her sacrifice. The earthquake continuing some hours, the Emperor himself, much affrighted, began to fly; after whom the blessed martyr cried out: 'Stay, O Emperor, stay; and help Apollo, who is broken all in pieces. Gather together his scattered limbs, and show the priests what they must now worship: or rather, because his priests are also ruined, let him first raise up himself, and then help them.' In the meantime, the devil that dwelt in the idol, in the presence of many both men and women, rolling himself in the dust, cried out with a hideous voice: 'O valiant virgin Martina, handmaid of the great God who is in heaven, thou, who keepest His commandments, hast detected my deformity, and dispossessed me of my habitation, in which I have dwelt these ninety-eight years, having many wicked spirits under me, who offer unto me daily many souls of men. O Alexander, adversary of the Christians, thou hast found a holy soul, by which thou hast driven me into hell, and brought my empire to a shameful end.'

"The devil, thus horribly lamenting, was seen by many to fly through the air in a dark cloud: who, amazed at it, admired the power of God. But the blinded Emperor would not understand it, but commands the holy virgin to be buffeted on the face, and her eyebrows to be torn with hooks: which, when the executioners had done for a long while together, being wearied out, they exclaimed: 'Wo be

unto us, sinners! We are rather tormented than she; we endure unsufferable pain, she, like a hard anvil, feeleth nothing; she buffets us. We beseech thee, O Emperor, command her to be taken out of our hands, for we see four men before her in great splendour, who return the blows upon us, which we endeavour to inflict upon her. Assuredly, He is the true God, who is on her side, and will not permit us to torment her.'

"The Emperor, enraged against her tormentors, as negligent in discharging their office, commanded them to grate her face with potsherds. The holy Martina, devoutly looking up to heaven, blessed her Lord Jesus Christ, together with the Father, and the Holy Ghost; humbly beseeching Him to give patience to herself, His lowest handmaid, and conversion to those who tormented her. And behold, immediately the undivided Trinity (whom in her holy prayers she so expressly adored) no less ready to hear her for others than for herself, caused a celestial light to environ her torturers, who were in number about eight, and a voice to be heard from heaven, which said: 'Unless my servant Martina had interceded for you, I would have struck you dead, long before this. But, desirous to kill the enemy, and to make you My servants, I have spared you. And you, daughter, take courage and do not fear; I am God whom thou dost adore and invoke: I will not forsake thee; nor will I permit the shameless, impious, and rebellious demon to domineer over thee.'

"Those who tormented the Saint, astonished at these miracles, fell down at her feet, beseeching her, that through her intercession they might obtain pardon of what by compulsion they had presumed to do against her: openly professing, they believed, adored, and worshipped Christ only. As for Alexander, although their Emperor, in this matter they feared him not, nor would they hear him. The blessed Martina advised them sincerely and with a pure heart to believe in Christ; assuring them, that they should have a plentiful reward in the other world, and should one day know how little would Alexander then be able to do, who so boastfully vaunted himself in this present life. The happy converts, encouraged by S. Martina, repeated with a great and holy confidence their former profession of their

faith in Christ, in face of the Emperor; who, enraged against them, commanded them to be hanged up, and their flesh to be slashed with knives. The holy martyrs in this cruel torment spoke not one word, only devoutly looked up to Heaven; whereat the tyrant was more incensed, and immediately gave sentence of death, lest by their means, others should be converted to the faith of Christ.

"The servants of Christ having devoutly prayed in this manner: 'O Lord of all things, Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son of God, the hope of those who fly unto Thee, to whose knowledge we were brought by Thy holy servant Martina, receive our souls in peace, and do not impute unto us, what in our error we committed against Thee;' signing themselves in the forehead with the holy Cross, laid down their lives for Christ with all joy and alacrity, submitting their heads to the sword, upon the seventeenth day of November.

"Another day, the Emperor caused S. Martina to be brought before him; and not being able to persuade her to worship his idols, commanded her body to be cut with sharp knives. The executioners discharging their bloody office, the blessed martyr appeared resplendent with such a brightness, that it dazzled the eyes of these who looked upon her: from her wounds flowed milk instead of blood,* and such a fragrant odour was diffused, as if a box of aromatic ointments had been broken. Amid all this butchery, she still sweetly conversed with her Lord, and sang: 'With my voice I have cried unto my Lord, and He hath heard me in the combat of my passion.'"

This miraculous insensibility to pain, or superhuman triumph over it, was attributed to magic. Severus ordered the tender virgin to undergo a further torment, much like that which was known in later times as being broken on the wheel. A relay of soldiers now began to bruise her limbs with heavy clubs; but these torturers, like the first, "desired the Emperor to free them from their torments, complaining that the angels of God returned their blows with iron bars, and that their very bones and flesh were as if burnt in a fire. Twelve soldiers successively, one after another, laid heavy blows upon the tender body of this

* The same miracle which attended the beheading of S. Paul. See SS. Ambrose and Chrysostom, as quoted in *Fasti Apostolici*, p. 110.

holy virgin; she, with a cheerful countenance, devoutly praying: 'My great desire is to give praise to Thee, O Lord, and to the glory of Thy Deity which helps me. I have given my back to blows, and my flesh to torments; nor have I turned away my face from grief for Thy glorious Name. O Lord, be not slow to help me, but sending from Thy holy habitation, heal me, who am beaten for Thy Deity."

At length, she was taken to prison, and there shut up till the following morning. The unendurable thing to her enemies was that wondrous splendour and brightness with which our Lord invested her virginal form, as a foretaste of the gift of "clarity" awaiting her in the realms of light, when "the just shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." They tried to dim and to mar it; but God willed otherwise.

"The holy virgin spent all the night in singing hymns, and glorifying God: and the angels were heard to sing with her in the prison. The morning being come, the Emperor sent an officer to fetch her. This man, even as he approached the prison walls, was conscious of a wondrous fragrance that proceeded from it, and asked those who accompanied him, if they did not perceive it. Some of them answered that the citizens, out of the respect they bore to their beloved Martina, had brought those aromatical odours. Others said, the gods had appeared propitious to her. Being come to the prison, they found the perfume much stronger and more fragrant. When the officer opened the first gate, he saw a great light. But, when he entered in the next chamber (for the prison had several, one within the other), such a splendour, as though of lightning, environed him, that all who were with him trembled, and he himself fell to the ground for fear. Recovering himself, however, he had the courage to enter the third chamber; where he saw blessed Martina seated on a royal throne, with a multitude of glorious ones, clothed in white, about her, whose glory dazzled the eyes of those that entered. Martina, holding in her hand a golden tablet, read from it these words: 'Quam magnificata sunt opera tua, Domine! Omnia in sapientia fecisti—How great are Thy works, O Lord! Thou hast made all things in wisdom'"*

* Psalm ciii. 24.

When S. Martina was brought again before Severus, it was to obtain a fresh triumph over the demon. The Emperor commanded her to enter into the temple of Diana, there to offer sacrifice, as he said, "to that most honourable goddess." The demon in the idol, seeing that the Saint was come to defeat him, cried out with a hideous voice: "Wo be to me! O God of heaven, whither shall I flee from Thy spirit? Fire pursueth me from the four corners of the temple." S. Martina, having entered the place, first signed herself in the Name of Christ with the holy Cross. Then, reprehending the Emperor "for worshipping a blockish idol, which had eyes but saw not; ears, but heard not; hands, but felt not; feet, but could not walk"—she approached the idol. "O thou," she exclaimed to the demon, "who dwellest in this dumb idol, deluder of those who sottishly sacrifice to thee, I command thee, that gnashing thy teeth thou go out, and depart hence." When she had so said, she made her prayer to the Eternal God, King of all things, who drove a legion of devils into the infernal gulf, that He would please to destroy this idol, made by the hands of men, and by divers punishments make Alexander to know that He was the true God who destroyeth those that dwell in idols, together with their priests.

"No sooner had she ended her prayer, than it thundered; and lightning, with fire from heaven, reduced to ashes the image of Diana, burnt up the priests of the temple, killed a multitude of infidels, and consumed the right side of the Emperor's purple robe. Then blessed Martina praised God, and said: 'Glory be to God on high, who giveth peace to those that love Him, and call upon His Name in truth.'"

Severus, hardening his heart, like another Pharao, against these signs and wonders, delivered her again to be tormented. She was now stretched upon a beam of wood, and her body was slashed with sharp knives; after which, her breasts were torn with hooks, by which she received no less than a hundred and eighteen wounds. These, however, she did not so much as feel; since the power of Christ aided and comforted her. Her prayer amidst these torments was: "O Cross of Christ, help me: for in thee is salvation."

"The holy Martyr still remaining constant in refusing to worship idols, the Emperor endeavoured by fair means to persuade her; swearing by his gods that he loved her, proffering to make her lady of his palace, and proclaim her publicly as Empress; nor would he require that she should sacrifice, but only say, for the satisfaction of the people: 'Great is the god Jupiter.' The Saint, devoutly casting up her eyes to heaven, besought our Lord Jesus Christ to give her constancy in her agony; and then told the tyrant, 'that she had rather be devoured by savage beasts (wherewith a little before they had threatened her) and so merit a blessed and eternal life with Christ, than by yielding to his allurements fall into the snare of eternal death.' Whereupon the Emperor commanded a most fierce lion, that had been kept fasting three days, to be let out upon her; but the beast laying aside its natural cruelty, ran to the Saint, and bowing, as it were out of reverence, kissed her feet. Which the tyrant observing, as also the Saint's constant cheerfulness in all her torments, bade her humble herself, and confess Jupiter to be God, for he it was that had helped her. To whom the holy virgin replied: 'He helped not Apollo, whom you loved so dearly; nor did he relieve Diana, both of whom by the power of Christ I have annihilated. How then can he help me?'

"The whole multitude, reflecting upon what had passed, cried out with a loud clamour: 'O Cæsar, save her whom God and the beasts have compassion on. Free her by whom the gods are ruined, and by whom God, who is in Heaven, hath manifested them that dwelt in idols to be devils, whom she hath made to flee.' The tyrant, not being able to pervert the holy martyr, sent her back to prison, whence after two days he called for her again, and carried her to a temple, where there were twelve idols; but prevailing nothing with her, caused her to be tormented anew with iron hooks, and that in so grievous a manner, that they pierced the very bones; but her torturers were sooner wearied out with tormenting, than she of being tormented; they desiring as heretofore, to be released, professing that the angels of God tormented them.

"After this, she was cast into a great fire; but as she prayed in the midst of the flames, there arose a great storm

and tempest, which drove the fire from her upon those who stood about her; whereby many were consumed. Severus, imputing all to magical arts, caused her head to be shaved, imagining the enchantment to lie in her hair. But this invention also not succeeding, he shut her up in a temple, where there was a statue of Jupiter, and sealed the door with his own ring. Here the blessed Saint sang praises to God, day and night. The Emperor, with his priests, visited the temple every day, but entered not into that part of it where the holy virgin was, because they heard the voices of many angels singing with her; which the foolish tyrant interpreted to be 'Jupiter and all the gods assembled to admonish and instruct Martina.' After nine days, having appointed a great sacrifice of bulls to be made, he opened that part of the temple, where the virgin was; whom they beheld sitting on a rich and glorious throne, with a great guard of most beautiful Ones about her, and from that blessed company came an exceeding sweet odour, as of incense. But the idol of Jupiter was cast down, and turned into ashes. Whereat the Emperor, being horribly enraged, gave a final sentence that Martina should be beheaded.

"This was most grateful news to the holy virgin; and presently beseeching her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for whose cause she had suffered, to receive her, though a sinner, into His glory, she happily ended her life by the sword. And there was heard by all the people a voice from Heaven, inviting her, in these terms: 'Martina, who hast fought valiantly for My name, enter with all My Saints into the kingdom of Heaven, there completing* thy confession. To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' At the hearing of which voice, the executioners fell down dead; and the whole City was terribly shaken by an earthquake; whereupon two thousand and thirty souls confessed Christ."

Ribadaneira, concluding this account, proceeds to vindicate the lives of the early Saints and martyrs from the charge of a certain sameness in detail. We may surely discern in the Acts of S. Martina, at least, some very distinguishing features, that mark her off from other virgin martyrs, if not

* That is, receiving the reward and consummation of that witness for the truth, which has made thee a martyr on earth, and secured thy throne among the martyred Saints in Heaven.

in kind, yet in degree. We seldom meet with so much temporal glory and triumph, anticipating the eternal, as when Martina is seen by her tormentors on a bright throne, surrounded by a choir of heavenly companions. Nor is the arm of the Lord, working through His servants, often so manifestly revealed, as when, at the word of a Christian maiden, Apollo falls on one side, Diana and Jupiter on another; even as the Egyptian idols toppled from their pedestals on the entrance of the Infant Saviour within the borders of the land.

But such differences lie within His Hand and Will. Even so, the leader of an army may bid one of his faithful warriors occupy a distinguished post, and commit to him the key of the whole position, while others are fighting, with no less merit, undiscerned amid the smoke of battle. So, in the great wide spiritual contest, some "have borne rule in their dominions,"* with "great power—ruling over the present people—and there are some, of whom there is no memorial," until the record of their achievements is read out before the Eternal Throne.

COLLECT.

O God, who among the other marvels of Thy power, hast given even to the weaker sex the glory of martyrdom: mercifully grant that we, who celebrate the birth-day of Blessed Martina, Thy virgin and martyr, may by her example walk on the way to Thyself. Through our Lord.

* Ecclus. xliv. 3, 4, 9.

SAINT DOROTHEA,

VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

FEBRUARY 6.

ABOUT A.D. 300.

FEW more graceful or suggestive narratives occur in the Church's annals, than the martyrdom of the young girl, Dorothea. It leads us along, till we seem to tread the very lawns of Paradise, breathing a fragrance like that of the fruits and flowers sent by her in an angel's hand to the scoffer, whom she thereby converted.

Is this a slight gain? Is it nothing, or little, as we toil on our path, pilgrims each with our own burden, bowed under sorrow and consciousness of sin, to be thus beckoned onward by a Christian maiden who went to heaven in her teens; thus to "look up, and lift up our heads" with a prospect of one day getting there ourselves? The demon, with his agents and underlings, and our own weak nature, and our wills that tend to grovel earthwards, all are pleading with us to accept present things—things tangible, earthly, soul-destroying. But the Saints, on their part, lean down towards us from their bright home, and whisper a better lesson. *Sursum corda*, they suggest; gently, and with yearning invitation, because their love of us is "as the mother loveth her only son." * "*Come up hither*," † they cry, as with "a great voice from heaven," and even as a mother would cry, in urgent tones, to her child straying near the precipice. For from that height, as with a bird's eye, or rather an angel's view, they clearly see our dangers, and our

* 2 Kings i. 26. † Apoc. xi. 12.

need of the strong motive, aye, the powerful utterance, of their heroic Christian example.

But S. Dorothea would allure us along the narrow way, more by the sweetness of the wondrous fruits and flowers which she culls for us, as for Theophilus her convert, from the ungrudging gardens of delight, into which her girlish feet passed so long ago. Ah, Dorothea—well-named, "Gift of God!" "Draw us, we will run after thee," after thy Lord and ours, "in the odour" of those blossoms of Paradise! Obtain for us a share in the gifts of grace, with their heavenly attractiveness, "coming down from the Father of lights," with "every best gift and every perfect gift," to cheer us on our way!

Such an aspiration as this did Theophilus learn from Dorothea to make, though he was far from beginning with it. He began with a scoff, and ended with a prayer; began by "having a taste for earthly things," the perishing fruits and flowers of this baser soil; but ended with the gift of a sense refined to "taste the things that are above." *

Let us view the scene on which was enacted this wonderful and saving change. Theophilus is on his moment of trial for eternity. The conversion of an individual soul "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God," † and then its probation onward, even to the end, is a noble yet fearful thing to look upon. It makes up a more thrilling drama, to the unseen eyes that watch it, than was presented in Greek tragedy to the awe-struck semi-circles of listeners, whose hearts almost ceased to beat, whose bright looks were dimmed with tears.‡ What risings and what fallings, and what fluctuations; what unexpected recoveries; what pure repentance, wrought from untoward

* Col. iii. 2.

† Acts xxvi. 18.

‡ For example, in the representation of the *Eumenides* of Æschylus, so finely portrayed by Schiller, in his poem "*Die Kranike des Ibycus*;" when the hearts of the spectators were heaving with awe-struck uncertainty, whether the scene before them were an effort of solemn tragedy and scenic skill, or whether the avenging powers had indeed come personally to assert their claims to the undiscovered guilty:—

"Dread fiction!—or if truth?—it rose and swell'd,
That chorus: what may such deep discords bode?
While those grim forms their old slow measure strode,
And each man, aw'd and hush'd, his very breathing held."

materials; what fair promises, falsified at last! Salvation and perdition seem to change places, and enact each other's parts. And, if even purblind mortals can have some glimpse of these great goings on, what is it to those good angels and bad, who read the tragedy at a glance! Not only Apostles in their conflicts, nor martyrs in their endurance, but each immortal soul in its struggle for life eternal, is "made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men." *

While we read about S. Dorothea, we have probably to place ourselves in the days of the Emperors Constantius Chlorus and Maximian Galerius, in the opening of that happy fourth age, which saw the conversion of the Empire before its close. The prosperous day has hardly come yet, however, at the period of this narrative. Persecution continues, though not as it raged in the latter days of Diocletian, who has now abdicated, and lives as a private gentleman. The purple which both he and his colleague, Maximian Herculeus, threw from their shoulders in 305, now rests upon the two Emperors named above, who had already been constituted "Cæsars," that is, heirs presumptive, to the divided imperial throne.

Constantius, surnamed Chlorus, or "the Pale," is the husband of S. Helena, though he repudiated his Christian wife on his accession, and took his heathen colleague's heathen daughter. He is successor to Diocletian the persecutor, and he is father to Constantine the Great. So that the name Chlorus recals two very different states of society in the Roman dominions: we seem to pass, as at a step, from the condition of being Christians, therefore thrown to the lions, to that of being Christians, therefore on the Emperor's side. But the latter condition of things will not be, until the struggle between the next pair of Emperors, Constantine and Maxentius, shall overthrow the paganism of more than a thousand years. It will come through the conquering power of that luminous Cross that is to marshal Constantine to victory.

Cappadocia seems to have been the province where S. Dorothea suffered; though place and period are less certain in this, than in most of the Saints' lives and deaths.

* 1 Cor. iv. 9.

Butler supposes it to have been in the reign of Diocletian; yet there seems no reason for disturbing the version of Ribadeneira, who assigns her martyrdom to the time of the joint Emperors mentioned above. Though Chlorus himself appears to have tolerated the Christians,* yet Apricius, the governor of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, being so far from the seat of empire, may have taken presumptive leave, and done a little persecuting on his own account, while Constantius was in Gaul and Britain, or when he finally died at York. Or, Apricius probably persecuted under orders from Maximian Galerius. Anyhow, it was in the opening of the fourth century that this holy virgin suffered for the faith.

How completely must the Moloch of cruelty have possessed the minds and hearts of those savages, when they could wreak their hatred of God's truth on the bodies of tender maidens, children, women naturally fearful of pain; on all that host of the young, the aged, the weak and defenceless, who meekly held by the Cross, and died for it!

But Dorothea had done more. For she had brought back to faith and repentance two sisters, Christina and Callista, to whom the governor had given her in custody in order to pervert her.

These unhappy maidens had "lapsed," as the ancient Church expressed it, under fear of torments; and, like many other apostates, in those days, and since, had greatly improved their temporal condition by so doing. But nothing can make up for the loss of inward peace. What rack was ever invented for the perishable body, to compare with the tortures of a racked and wounded conscience? And what a moment of grace was it now for these sisters, when S. Dorothea became an inmate, or prisoner, in their house! They tried to persuade her to follow their example; but they found the Gospel that dwelt on the lips of the maiden was stronger than their false arguments. "The wicked have told me fables: but not as Thy law."† Dorothea prevailed; nay, "not she, but the grace of God with her."‡

Then the demon, enraged at the prospect of losing his

* S. Bede calls him "a man of extraordinary meekness and courtesy" (*Eccl. Hist.* i. viii.).

† Psalm cxviii. 85. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

two victims, tried to cast them into despair. This is generally his second manœuvre. He first robs a soul of the love of God by sin; then makes the sinner desperate, by whispering that the case is beyond remedy. What hope, he now urged, could remain for those who had so utterly abandoned their faith? How could they suppose they might be accepted once more? They had sold their birthright for a mess of pottage, like Esau. They had "poured out themselves,* after the error of Balaam, for a reward." They had brought themselves under the condemnation of an inspired Apostle—for the enemy, we all know, can quote each part of the Bible, in any sense that suits his purpose. And what, he whispered, does S. Paul write to the Hebrews?† No; it was all over with them now; they had to remain where they were, and to make the best of a bad bargain. Let them not be such fools as to lose both worlds together.

Thus did the Enemy try his utmost to prevent their return to grace. But Dorothea was a match for him on this side also. "Turning their reasons and arguments," says Ribadeneira, "the Saint, by degrees, persuaded them to acknowledge their fault, and return to God; to ask of Him pardon, to enter fresh into the battle again, and dispose themselves to die for their faith; 'for God,' said she, 'is most merciful, and there is no wound so incurable that He cannot heal. He is called a Saviour, because He doth desire to save us; and a Redeemer, because He doth redeem us; and He holds it to be a greater crime to despair of His mercy, than to deny Him in torments.'" Admirable exposition of the inexhaustible loving kindness, the *copiosa redemptio*, of our Divine Lord! Would that this "turn and live!" was always thus freely on the lips of those who speak for Him to the hearts of sinners. It prevailed with Christina and Callista.

Resolving now to wash out their apostasy in their own hearts' blood, they went with constancy to announce to Apricius, not only that they had failed to pervert Dorothea, but that she had triumphed in the contest, had led captivity captive, and had won them back to the standard of the King of martyrs. Apricius, in his fury,

* S. Jude 11. † See Heb. vi. 4—6.

commanded the two sisters to be tied back to back, and cast into the fire, in case they refused to sacrifice to the gods. "And they cried out aloud to our Lord: 'Receive, O Lord Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, this our penance, and pardon us;' and when they had said this, they were thrown into the fire before S. Dorothea's eyes, who received a singular great contentment and joy that these souls were rescued from the devil, and purchased again for God. She spoke thus unto them: 'Go, my sisters; go before me into heaven; be assured that God hath pardoned you, and that by this martyrdom you have recovered what before you had lost, and that the Eternal Father will come to meet you, to receive you into His bosom, opening unto you the arms of His infinite mercy.'" *

Her two converts (or shall we say reverts?) being safely despatched into eternal life, Dorothea had now to stand her own trial. Not that she had hitherto escaped. When first brought before Apricius, after the usual threats employed to shake the steadfastness of Christian confessors, she was tortured on the *equuleus*, or rack: and then it was, in the midst of that great torment, that she addressed those words to Apricius, which, in the sequel, converted the lawyer Theophilus.

"Why," asked this meek, retiring maiden, armed with a courage not her own; "why do you forbear extreme measures? For what are you waiting? Finish quickly what you are to do; that I may depart to the sight and fruition of Him for Whose love's sake I am so far from fearing your torments, that I do indeed desire them. For He is my Spouse, and invites me to His paradise: that garden of delight, where the fruit is as grateful to the eye as delicious to the taste; a garden ever fresh and fair, where lilies and roses, and flowers of all kinds, wither not, but preserve their bloom through every season. There fountains of living water are ever springing, and the souls of the Saints are rejoicing with Christ."

Her Acts record with what scorn the judge heard her describe this her clear insight into things unseen and eternal; but it can well be imagined. For "the sensual

* Ribadeneira.

man perceiveth not those things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined."* Heathenism had led men so far away from Paradise, that hardly the remotest fragrance reached their souls from that blessed place. Here and there, a poet, whether led by fancy or by some preludes of faith, would strike his harp and sing of the Elysian Fields; but it was merely a stray gleam amid the darkness, and their Elysium was a poor and cheerless kind of place, after all. It was but a dusky heaven, without God. So, when the disciples of the Crucified proclaimed their hopes, it had about as much effect on the bystanders as when just Lot denounced to his sons-in-law the coming vengeance: "he seemed to them to speak, as it were, in jest."

One there was, however, who listened to the suffering virgin's words, as she thus preached, on the rack, the love of Jesus crucified. This man jested at first, like others who surrounded the tribunal of Apricius, or as the good thief began, it would seem, by maligning our Lord on the Cross, and ended by believing and confessing Him. It was Theophilus; and he was born to be a gem in Dorothea's crown, like Christina and Callista, who were already gathered to the treasury of God.

And thus it came about. Her torments, of course, were increased for what she had done: and grace, in proportion, was given her to rejoice under them.

We give the sequel in the words of Ribadeneira, "done," as it has been, into quaint English, by some anonymous Catholic, a century and a half ago.†

"Whilst they were tormenting her, and disjointed all her limbs, the Saint was as joyful and contented as those who have at length obtained their desire and wish. Whereat the judge, wondering, said unto her: 'What meaneth this feigned joy that thou showest? Why dost thou so counterfeit unto us a false content?' But the virgin replied: 'Never in all the days of my life did I feel so much joy

* 2 Cor. ii. 4.

† "Translated into English by W. P., Esqr. The second edition, corrected and amended. London: Printed by B. S., in the year MDCCXXX."

and satisfaction as I have at present; both for having restored to God those two souls which you had taken from Him, for which the angels do rejoice in heaven, as also for the hopes I have, of speedily enjoying my God in their company. Wherefore make haste, Apricius, and keep me no longer in a languishing expectation.' The cruel tyrant, hearing this, bade them put lighted torches to her sides, and burn her bowels. But the martyr, the more she was tormented, the more cheerful she was, and laughed at her executioners. Then, by the tyrant's order, she was taken down from the rack, and her virginal face was most barbarously buffeted; for he was ashamed to hear her speak so resolutely, and with so much liberty. But still, as they multiplied her pains, so did they augment her joy; for the vigour of our Lord's Spirit did more abound in her. Finally, the executioners being wearied, and Apricius confounded, the blessed Saint was condemned to be beheaded; which sentence she received with wonderful joy, and thanking our Lord thus: 'I praise thee, my Lord, chaste lover of souls, for that Thou hast called me to the marriage of the Spotless Lamb, and invited me to Thy heavenly banquet.'

"As she was led to execution, an advocate, by name Theophilus, having heard her say that in the Paradise of Christ, her Spouse, whither she was going, there was abundance of delicious fruit in all seasons, and roses that never faded, said unto her, in merriment: 'Do you hear, you spouse of Christ? Do me one pleasure, and send me from your Spouse's garden some of those fruits and flowers which you have so highly commended unto us.' And the virgin, soberly and confidently, answered: 'I will do it without fail; I will do it.' And whilst she was on her knees, having now ended her prayer, and expected the blow of the sword, there appeared an Angel in the form of a little child, with a little basket in his hand, and in it three most fair and goodly apples, and three admirable roses. The martyr desired him to carry them from her to Theophilus, and tell him, 'Dorothea, according to her promise, sent him these from the garden of her Spouse, Jesus Christ.'

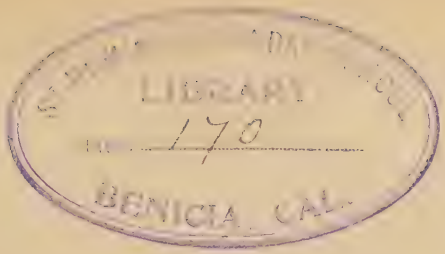
"It happened that Theophilus was then recounting to his companions what had passed between the virgin and

himself, and jesting at the apples and roses which she promised to send him, it being the sixth of February, and in time of a great frost: when, unexpectedly, in comes the child, and brings him that present from the Saint.

"It is strange how this wrought upon Theophilus: he was presently changed into another man, and acknowledging the divine power, confessed with a loud voice, 'Jesus Christ was the only true God.' And after many questions and answers that passed between him and his companions, the governor, who had been informed of this sudden change, sent for him, but could not yet believe what he heard of him; for Theophilus had been a great stickler, and one that was most active in kindling the fire of persecution against Christians. But after a long discourse, finding him to be most firm and resolute in confessing Christ to be God, and deriding the idols, he commanded him to be hung upon the rack, and cruelly tortured; the blessed man in the meanwhile rejoicing, and saying: 'Now I am a Christian indeed, hanging, as it were, upon a cross.' And when the president, seeing streams of blood running down from his wounds, did say to him: 'Unhappy man that thou art, hast thou no pity of thy body?' he answered: 'Unhappy thou! take pity of thy soul; for I will not spare my body in the present time, that God may pardon my soul eternally.' Apricius bade them tear his sides with claws of steel, and then burn them with fiery torches; but when neither these nor other torments could shake the undaunted courage of Theophilus, he commanded his head to be struck off; at the pronouncing of which sentence, the martyr answered: 'I give Thee thanks, my Lord Jesus Christ, for this favour.' And so he died, and went to enjoy God eternally in heaven, together with S. Dorothea."

COLLECT.

May blessed Dorothea, O Lord, Thy virgin and martyr, obtain Thy pardon for us; forasmuch as she was ever pleasing to Thee, by the merit of her chastity, and the manifestation of Thy power. Through our Lord.



SS. PERPETUA, FELICITAS, AND THEIR COMPANIONS,

MARTYRS AT CARTHAGE.

MARCH 7.

A.D. 203.

We lose a good deal, perhaps, of the benefit we might derive from the Saints' lives, by not considering them to have shared, after all, the same flesh and blood that we are of, though elevated and strengthened by special grace. They seem to be so high above us, that we are almost tempted to despair of getting up to their neighbourhood. A saintly pope or bishop, a martyr under excruciating torments; or again, a virgin Saint like S. Teresa, S. Catherine of Siena, S. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi—these, by the sanctifying office they bore, or by being called to do and suffer extraordinary things, seem to stand on another platform from ourselves. We think, as we read their acts: How much of poor human nature had they left in them, after all this? Was it all refined and evaporated away? Did they know what it was to be teazed by vanity, to get out of temper, to be distracted in prayer? S. Bernard used to go to his daily meal, such as it was, as to torture; so completely was the sense of hunger extinguished in him. These things, and much that might be added from those lives that make up the Church's token of Sanctity, are admirable, indeed; but, so far from being strictly imitable, they might tend to prove very discouraging.

Accordingly, when we meet with Saints of what may be called a more domestic character, and, in some ways, a

commoner life, there is a sense that we are now breathing an atmosphere not too rarified for our weak lungs. We recognize, indeed, persons indefinitely better than ourselves, yet more like what we are, at our very best. *Plus* a great deal, no doubt: and to get anywhere near them, for a continuance, we should have a stiff climb, and a long one. Still, it does not look to be the absolute Mount Blanc or very Jungfrau, their inaccessible snow-peaks tinted with rosy light, while we stand below, gaze upward and marvel, and praise God.

This is not to institute a comparison between the measures of sanctity attained by one or by another of His servants. From such speculations our sheer ignorance debars us. "There are last that shall be first, and there are first that shall be last," may be a rule applying, in a certain measure, to those glorious and glorified ones. Their sentiment about each other has always been that of the great Baptist towards his Master: "He must increase, but I must decrease." We shall know their relative positions in the many mansions of the heavenly Jerusalem, when He shall "be justified in His sayings" at the revelations of the Last Day.

Domestic Christian life affords a large scope for sanctification. The Church always proclaims this, while she exalts above it, indefinitely higher, the life of celibate consecration to the divine espousals. Does she not teach that holy matrimony is one of the seven Sacraments instituted by our Lord? Well, SS. Perpetua and Felicitas were both married women. Again; does not S. Paul exhort those who had embraced the faith in the condition of slavery, to be content with their lot, as serving the Master of all? Revocatus and Felicitas were both slaves. Did not the early Christians realize that the true nobility was that of being born again in Christ? Of the two female martyrs whose names we now celebrate, Perpetua was well-born, and married into her own rank of life; but these accidental advantages were merged in the Christian sisterhood that united her heart with that of her kinswoman in the Lord, the slave Felicitas. For in the unity of the Faith, and the life of grace, there is "neither barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."

A special interest attaches to these martyrdoms, from their being narrated, up to a certain point, by one of the sufferers. We have, in fact, the autobiography of the last days of S. Perpetua: and she includes the account of those who suffered with her. Her narrative is carried on to the eve of the day when they were exposed to the wild beasts; from that point, it is continued by an eye-witness of the martyrdoms. Besides the three already named, were two others, Saturninus and Secundulus. But even these did not make the number complete; they were to be joined by a sixth, a voluntary fellow-prisoner and fellow-martyr. This was Saturus, who seems to have been brother to Saturninus. He would not abandon his friends in their "light and momentary affliction;" nay, he volunteered to join them; and so shared their eternal crown.

Here, then, we have what might almost be called a family group; a lady, twenty-two years of age, with her little infant not yet weaned; a female slave, expecting within a short time to become a mother: Revocatus, another slave, perhaps of the household of Perpetua. Secundulus died, not in the amphitheatre, but by a real though more common-place martyrdom, his prison-sufferings. Saturus is noticeable for a touch of nature consoling to read of, in one who had the great grace of martyrdom. For, prepared as he was to suffer all for Christ, there was *one* mode of death which he held in special dread. He would have faced it, and found grace to undergo it, if our Lord had called him thereto; yet, pondering beforehand, he would fain have been spared it, as in fact he was. Lions, leopards, wild boars, fierce horned cattle, had been provided for the occasion; these were no especial terror to Saturus. But there *was* one beast, the thought of which was a dread to him—the savage, surly bear. Oh, in mercy, not the bear! Perhaps he had heard his sullen growls, or had caught sight of him swaying himself backward and forward, and sideways, in his den; grotesque, yet terrible to behold; awkward, shaggy, ponderous, yet active, sharpened too by hunger, with those small fiery eyes, and a kind of remorseless leer on his bristly jaws. A leopard, now, is a clean, graceful animal; one jag with his long tooth would be a swift passage to heaven. But to be hugged, and to hear one's bones crack, under the rude encompassing

paws of yonder shaggy monster, and mangled and mumbled —Oh, anything but that bear!

Perpetua had her infant to commit to Divine Providence, and her poor old broken-hearted father to leave in his dark cheerless paganism. The father knew well how to urge the infant as a plea, as well as his own gray hairs; and we may well conceive how the heart of this poor lady was torn under her double anguish. The more so, because she had not yet received the grace of regeneration; the whole party being catechumens.

"We were in the hands of our persecutors," she says, when my father, out of the affection he bore me, made new efforts to shake my resolution. I said to him: 'Can that vase, which you see there, change its name?' 'No,' he answered. I replied: 'Nor can I call myself any other than I am; that is to say—a Christian.' At that word, my father in a rage fell upon me, as if he would have pulled out my eyes, and beat me; but, seeing me invincible, he went away in confusion. After this, we enjoyed a little repose, and in that interval received baptism. On our coming out of the water, the Holy Ghost inspired me to pray for nothing but patience under bodily pains. A few days after this, we were put into prison. I was shocked at the horror and darkness of the place; for until then, I knew not what such kind of places were. We suffered much that day, chiefly by reason of the great heat caused by the crowd, and the evil treatment we had from the soldiers."

She then narrates how she commended her child to the care of her mother, who seems to have been a Christian, as was one of her brothers also. During their imprisonment, the martyr's relations, as well as the deacons of the Church, apparently had free access to them. "One day, my brother said to me: 'Sister, I am convinced that you are a special favourite of heaven: pray to God to reveal to you whether this imprisonment will end in martyrdom or not, and acquaint me with it."

Accordingly, on the Saint's prayer, a vision was granted to her.

"I saw a golden ladder, which reached from earth to heaven; but so narrow, that only one could mount it at a time. To the two sides were fastened all sorts of iron

instruments, as swords, lances, hooks, and knives; so that if one went up carelessly, he was in great danger of having his flesh torn by those weapons. At the foot of the ladder lay a dragon of enormous size, who kept guard, to turn back and terrify those who endeavoured to mount it." A significant vision, when we remember the unheard-of cruelties by which the pagans endeavoured to shake the martyrs' fortitude with their instruments of torture; as also "the dragon, the old serpent,"* whose interests those persecutors were promoting, and the manifest danger of apostasy under fear of pains. But Perpetua saw that in this vision she commended herself to our Lord, and so, in the power of His Sacred Name, stilled the dragon. "Thus I mounted to the top, and there I saw a garden, spacious and boundless, in the midst whereof sate a man of lofty stature, habited as a shepherd,† with white hair. He was milking his sheep, surrounded by many thousands of persons clothed in white garments. He called me by my name, bade me welcome, and gave me some curds made of the milk he had drawn: I put my hands together, received, and ate; and all that were present said aloud, Amen. The noise awakened me, while I [seemed to be] chewing something very sweet. When I had related this vision to my brother, we both concluded that we should suffer death." It is not clear how that brother was named: certainly not Secundulus, who had died in prison before the rest; nor Saturninus, who was beheaded afterwards.

This vision throws light upon two great points of primitive antiquity. First, we are irresistibly reminded of the figure of the Good Shepherd, occurring so often in the fresco-paintings of the catacombs. Again, when we hear her describe her reception of the heavenly food communi-

* Apoc. xii. 9.

† Another proof how deeply our Lord's tender and touching description of Himself as the Good Shepherd impressed the early Christians. It afforded so blessed a contrast to the savage loveless paganism out of which they had been rescued. The symbol is of frequent recurrence in the frescoes and eucharistic glass vessels of the Roman catacombs, where He is represented, not only as bringing home the strayed sheep, but sometimes a *goat*, on His shoulders. The leniency and patient love for sinners herein implied stirred the indignation of Tertullian, after his lapse into Montanism, and he launched some of his bitterest taunts against the Church's tenderness towards the lapsed.

cated to her in this vision, our thoughts turn to the Divine Eucharist, which perhaps she had not been able to receive sacramentally. It was the custom in early days for each communicant to answer Amen, when the priest, with the adorable particle, pronounced: "The Body of Christ."* . . Perpetua, simply as a catechumen, would not have been taught these observances; so jealously did the early Church provide that the uninitiated should have heavenly truths ministered to them by slow degrees.† But as a confessor, on the eve of martyrdom, her instruction would probably have been accelerated. It may be that the deacons, Tertius and Pomponius, whom she mentions as visiting the band of expectant martyrs, had already given them their First Communion in the prison. If not, then we have, as from Heaven itself, an account of a spiritual communion, which is most valuable.

Moreover, if we were employing this narrative for purposes of dogmatic proof (and its antiquity and genuineness eminently fit it for such use), it is obvious to remark that, in the vision, Perpetua communicated in one kind. There is no mention of the chalice. The martyr "received and ate," and seemed to herself to "chew, something very sweet" —this last circumstance being an allusion, doubtless, to the taste of the manna, that splendid type of the Most Holy

* "He who ate the manna, died; he who eateth this Body, it shall be to him the remission of sins, and he shall not die eternally. Therefore it is not without a meaning that thou sayest, Amen, when thou dost receive; professing in thy soul that thou receivest the Body of Christ. The priest saith to thee; 'The Body of Christ;' and thou sayest, 'Amen;' that is, It is true. Let thy heart retain what thy lips profess" (St. Ambrose, De Sacram. lib. iv. c. 4).

† Especially with regard to the Holy Eucharist, this Discipline of the Secret outlived the days of persecution, and continued down to the time of S. Augustine, in the fifth century. E.g. "Whither does he lead the believers and the baptised? To the manna. Lo, I say the manna. [St. Augustine will not speak of the Eucharist by its true name in a public treatise.] It is known what the Jews, the people of Israel, received; it is known what God rained down from heaven for them; and catechumens know not what Christians receive" (Tract. xi. in Johann. n. 4, col. 1805-6). Again: "They who know the Scriptures know what Melchisedech, the priest of the Most High God, brought forth, when he blessed Abraham. We must not mention this, on account of the catechumens; but the faithful recognize," &c. (Serm. cccvii. n. 3, c. 1833).

Sacrament of the altar. "The taste thereof was like to flour with honey."* "Thou didst feed Thy people with the food of Angels, and gavest them bread from heaven . . having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste."†

Several other visions were granted to S. Perpetua, relating to her approaching conflict, and the joys of Heaven that were thereupon to be hers. One, however, concerned her young brother Dinocrates, who had died some time before, and whom by her prayers she relieved from purgatorial sufferings that are vividly described.‡

The remaining details were added by an eye-witness; for now approached the moment when she and her companions were to confess their good confession before a savage multitude in the amphitheatre. Poor Felicitas greatly feared lest her martydom should be delayed; it being against the Roman law to put anyone to death who was about to become a mother. "The rest also," says Butler, "were sensibly afflicted, on their part, to leave her alone in the road to their common hope." They began therefore to pray fervently that her child might be born before the "shows," or combats, began. Our Lord was mindful of His promise to hear the united prayer of His faithful ones; Felicitas entered prematurely on her time of travail. Suffering nature caused her to cry out in her pain; whereupon the guard stationed at the door began to mock at what seemed her want of fortitude, and said: "If you cannot bear these throes without crying out, how will you be able to endure the torments and cruel death awaiting you?" But the heroic woman returned an answer worthy of a martyr. "Now," she said, "it is myself who suffer; but *then*, Another will suffer in me, and for me, because I shall suffer for Him. Now, with the (mere) powers of nature I am paying the tribute of pain which to nature is due; but *then* the grace of Heaven will overcome the tor-

* Exodus xvi. 31.

† Wisdom xvi. 20. An inspired word which the Church has adopted for the versicle and response at Benediction: *Panem de cœlo præstitisti eis, omne delectamentum in se habentem.*

‡ See the passage quoted at length in Waterworth's *Faith of Catholics*, v. iii. pp. 153, 154.

ments which your cruelty shall inflict upon me." Her new-born daughter was taken by a Christian woman, and brought up as her own child.

After enduring shame and indignity, as well as cruel treatment, they all went cheerfully to death, singing, on their way to the amphitheatre, that verse of the psalm: "All the gods of the Gentiles are demons; but the Lord made the Heavens." For this, they were buffeted on the face; but "they raised their voices so much the more, repeating the same verse, and praising and magnifying our Lord." "Joy sparkled in their eyes, and appeared in all their gestures and words. Perpetua walked with a composed countenance and tranquil step, as one cherished by Jesus Christ, her eyes modestly cast down: Felicitas went with her, following the [other martyrs,] not able to contain her joy." They rejected various idolatrous ceremonies that were usual with those who were to suffer in the arena; while Perpetua declared, on behalf of all, that they came there willingly, on the faith of a promise that they should not be forced to anything contrary to their religion.

When they appeared in the amphitheatre, Perpetua broke forth into a song of praise, as though already in triumph; others among the martyrs warned the spectators, and Hilarian the judge, of the coming judgments of God. Thereupon they were scourged; and then the wild beasts were let loose upon them. Saturus was spared the bear he so much dreaded; for the beast would not come out of his den, and the martyr was sent to heaven under the fangs of a leopard. Seeing him covered with blood, the savage multitude cried out, in scorn: "He is well baptized." Unconsciously, these heathens proclaimed a great Christian truth: baptism in the blood of one's own martyrdom being reckoned by the Church as equivalent to water-baptism, where *that* cannot be had.

Perpetua, meanwhile, and then Felicitas, were both exposed to the attack of a savage cow. Perpetua was tossed into the air, and fell on the arena. Gathering her clothes around her, with the modesty of a Christian matron, she composedly tied up her hair, which had fallen loose; then went to Felicitas, who lay on the ground, much hurt by having been tossed; and aided her to rise. "They stood

together, expecting another assault from the beasts; but the people crying out that it was enough, they were led to the gate Sanevivaria, where those that were not killed by the beasts were despatched, at the end of the shows, by the *confectores*. All the while that Perpetua was on the horns of the savage beast, she remained, like S. Laurence on the bars of his gridiron, rapt and absorbed in God. So completely, that she was unconscious of what had passed, until she saw her torn garments, and the blood that flowed from her wounds. Together with the rest who survived, she was brought back into the midst of the arena, to be despatched with the sword. This was in obedience to the howls of the spectators, not yet sated with blood; and here Perpetua had to endure a prolonged martyrdom, from the unskilfulness and hesitation of the 'prentice-hand appointed to give her the *coup de grace*.

But, not to dwell on such harrowing details, let us rather ask, with her great fellow-countryman, S. Augustine: "Where was she, when assailed and torn by so furious a wild animal, without feeling her wounds—when, after that fierce assault, she asked when it was to begin? How was she occupied, not to behold what every one else beheld? What was she enjoying, not to be sensible of such an agony? By what love, by what vision, by what potion was she so transported out of herself, and as it were divinely inebriated, as to appear without feeling in her mortal body?"

To supplement the great Doctor's questions; what are *we* about, and what sense have we of the power of that same Grace, who are so weak and wavering in fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life, whereunto we are called? We, who "have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin?"

COLLECT.

Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord our God, to venerate with increasing devotion the triumph of Thy holy martyrs, Perpetua and Felicitas: that, unable as we are, worthily to celebrate them in our thoughts, we may at least bring them the constant tribute of a lowly reverence. Through our Lord.

SAINT FRANCIS OF PAULA,

FOUNDER OF THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS MINIM.

APRIL 2.

A.D. 1507.

A SAINT is one who carries everywhere his God, residing in his heart. He is "Theophorus," the bearer of his God. A divine truth, proclaimed by S. Ignatius, the great martyr of Antioch, to the astonishment of the Emperor Trajan. "What meanest thou, old man, by calling thyself Theophorus? Dost thou then bear thy God within thee?" "Yes," answered that ecstatic lover of martyrdom; "for it is written: 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them.'" Upon which, his sentence was pronounced: "We command that Ignatius, who calls himself Theophorus, be thrown to the lions."

One consequence of this inhabitation of God in the souls of His elect is, that they are equal to every occasion, and every position. How can those be thrown off their balance, who cleave to Him, the Eternal Centre? *Mihi autem Deo adhærere bonum est.* Change of circumstance, of place, company, employment, cannot affect those who have the Lover of His own for their companion and guest. They are "everywhere in exile, therefore everywhere at home."* Inasmuch as their Beloved shares that exile, walks with them through this dark, cold world, they find their home wherever they may find themselves; for they find it in Him, and He is with them and within them. And so S. Paul, enumerating the causes and events that divide ordinary men

* A maxim of S. Ignatius Loyola.

from their welfare, whether tribulation, distress, famine, danger, persecution—nay, evil angels with all their powers, things present, with ills that are felt, things to come, with ills apprehended—sweeps them away with a couple of words: *Quis separabit?**

The quality of mind, then, which is versatility and resource in the natural order, may still be so described in the supernatural; with this difference. "The sensual man"†—"he who measureth divine mysteries by natural reason, sense, and human wisdom only"‡—he who guides himself practically by mere human judgments and motives—is consistent with himself, because he rests and centres on that poor self, which he worships, apart from God.

> Each varied circumstance that life could bring
> Show'd Aristippus in his graceful self.

But in the Saint, the child of God, these engaging qualities are sublimated to a higher sphere of existence and action; for "in Him he lives, and moves, and is,"§ Who is "yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever."‖

Such thoughts possess us when we read, as in the life of S. Francis of Paula, how one whose chosen home was a narrow cell, with a scull and a crucifix and scourge, was called to make a triumphal progress through crowding jubilant multitudes, on his way to a king's court. He was the same simple, humble friar, whether in his small monastery in Calabria, or surrounded by guards and courtiers, standing by the sick-bed of Louis XI. of France. We must look in upon him, in each of these very diverse positions.

The life of Francis spans nearly the whole of the fifteenth century. He was born in 1416, at Paula in Calabria, of poor parents, long childless. They obtained this humble yet glorious son by earnest supplications to the great Saint of Assisi, then nearly two centuries after his death. The infant Francis not only received the name of his seraphic patron, but seemed, from the first, to emulate his virtues. Poverty he inherited from his parents, but he embraced it and made it voluntary. Mortifications were his, in great measure, from the condition

* Rom. viii. 25, seq. † 1 Cor. ii. 14.
‡ Note on the text in the Douay Bible.
§ Acts xvii. 28. ‖ Heb. xiii. 8.

in which he was born; but he began very early to practise those that are used in religion. At twelve years of age, his father took him to be a boarder among the Franciscans of S. Mark, not far from his native place. And there, this mortified boy led a life which was the presage of his future sanctity. In imitation of our Lord Himself at the same age, he seemed to be wholly "in the things" of the Eternal Father. Unprofessed, he notwithstanding kept the Franciscan rule, and even added to its austerities. At the same time, he acquired the rudiments of human learning, which was all he ever knew of it. Francis remained, through life, unacquainted with much, whereon inferior men spend large portions of their time; but all he needed to know was partly acquired now, partly infused through his life-long prayer.

Quoniam non cognovi litteraturam, says the Psalmist,* *introibo in potentias Domini.* This was true, with Francis, to the very letter; his letters he possessed very scantily. But the power he gained by prayer transcended all merely acquired knowledge; for he possessed the grace of God very abundantly. Learning is excellent, when pervaded by unction, and directed solely to the Divine glory. It is very often necessary. A priest, for instance, without a due measure of it, would be not only incompetent, but guilty. Yet there were shoals of sufficiently instructed priests scattered about Europe, in the fifteenth century, and to no one of them did a king of France send urgent embassies that they should come to him, save to the hermit of Paula. For it is the glory of Infinite Wisdom, at times, to choose the unlearned—in all but the science of the Saints—"to confound the wise."† When the French courtiers were astonished‡ to see a monarch, jealous, difficult, crafty and

* Psalm lxx. 15, 16.

† 1 Cor. i. 27.

‡ Commines, in his Memoirs, says of the Saint's progress towards the court of Louis XI.: "The said hermit passed through Naples, honoured and visited as if he had been a great Apostolic legate, both by the king of Naples and by his children, and appeared *among them as if he had been a man brought up at Court.* Thence he passed through Rome, and was visited by all the Cardinals; and thrice he had private audience with the Pope, and sat by him on a handsome chair, for the space of three or four hours at a time (which was a great honour

suspicious towards all beside, receive the poor friar with such unbounded joy and deference, Francis might meekly have answered: "We have received, not the spirit of this world, but the spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God. Which things also we speak, not in the learned words of human wisdom, but in the doctrine of the Spirit."*

At the end of a year, young Francis quitted S. Mark's, and persuaded his parents to accompany him in some pious pilgrimages, especially to Assisi and to Rome. They must have been made on foot, and with great hardship; for poverty, both of birth and of estate, as well as of will, journeyed with them; and they who are very poor, know what it is to travel under difficulties. Francis, however, even amid these conditions, saw enough of the world to be convinced that it was not the place for him. Solitude and recollection were what he aimed at: so, with great humility and affection asking his parents' blessing, he set off alone toward the sea-coast.

It is not every father or mother who would thus consent to part with an only son—and such a son. But the parents of Francis seem worthy to have had him as their offspring. As we read these details, events in the Gospels rise spontaneously to our thoughts: we seem to look upon copies of Joseph and of Mary, with our Lord in His early years. Happy the parents who can say *Fiat*, not only when their children are taken from them by death, but when the grace of God allures them into the wilderness, and severs them from all earthly relationships by vow.

On the coast of Calabria, this boy, not yet nineteen, hews out for himself a sort of cave in a rock, and lives there on roots and wild herbs, with such occasional supply of coarse food as the poor fishers or peasants can afford him. Such were the outward symptoms of his life; but it

for so small a man), answering with so much wisdom, that every one was astonished at it." And so, of the after-impression which he produced at the Court of Louis XI., Charles VIII., and Louis XII., the same courtier-historian adds: "He seemed to be inspired by God, in his words and his remonstrances; for otherwise he could not have known how to speak of the things he spoke of."

* 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

was sustained, fostered, compensated, by an inner life of constant prayer.

Those were days, when a large amount of the supernatural was afloat in men's minds. To live a life above the world, a life of maceration, silence, self-contempt, operated like a magnet, to attract many others. Crowds were easily drawn together to hear a friar proclaiming to them the eternal truths, or to undertake some painful pilgrimage to a holy spot. The words of the preacher, the occasion of the pious journey, appealed at once to first principles that lived and energized in the multitude. Corruption, disorders, might exist: but there was always faith to combat them. Nowadays, a crowd is easily enough assembled, an enthusiasm created; but it is about something so earthly or so unworthy, that it seems almost profane to match the two phases of life together, or put them on the same page. A singer creates a *furore*, and is deluged with bouquets of flowers; a favourite elephant leaves our shores, and is bewept with an amount of maudlin foolishness which makes us doubt the sanity of our countrymen. It was not so in the ages of faith; ages which, because earnest for the life to come, have been branded as "dark." People loved, in those days too, to hear good singing, and were curious about an elephant; but they would have left both one and the other, to follow S. Antony of Padua, or S. Vincent Ferrer, on a missionary tour through the neighbouring towns, or to toil through the rugged forest-paths that led up to Einsiedlen.

It was not long, therefore, before this youth in the cave by the sea-shore began to draw souls to the way of perfection. Two men, the first-fruits of a numerous harvest, came to place themselves under the direction of an almost unlettered teacher of nineteen years. Three small cells arose, and a minute chapel, all of the rudest kind. A priest in the neighbourhood had the charity to come and say their Mass. Such was the cradle of the order of Friars Minim, "less than the least."

Some seventeen years after, their numbers had increased so greatly, that it became necessary to think of a monastery and a church. About the year 1453, the authorization of the Archbishop was asked and obtained. And then was to

be seen a strange and edifying sight. There came a crowd of volunteer-workmen and workwomen, pressing to be employed on the building. Noblemen, ladies of rank and of delicate habits, people of all stations, occupations, modes of life, and degrees of devoutness, concurred to help young Francis to raise his walls. They brought zeal in place of skill; and that is often the better architect.

During this time, God bestowed upon His servant a gift of miracles, which was continued, with great abundance and marvellous results, during his life.

And now, the building is finished, and the Community installed. They lived by some regulations which Francis put together, until a more distinct Rule should be drawn up and approved. Devoted to his great namesake and patron of Assisi, he wished his brothers to be called The Hermits of Saint Francis. Afterwards, at the instance of Pope Alexander VI., he changed that name for *Minims*, "the Least Ones," which well expressed the humility and self-renouncement that were the very spirit of the Order.

It was impossible to draw near the Saint of Paula without being struck with admiration and profound respect. Far and wide flew the report of his sanctity, of his miracles. It reached the ears of the Pope; and the common Father of all felt it his duty to verify what he had heard. He sent one of his chamberlains to the monastery; not habited, seemingly, as a priest. This official came on a sudden, confronted the holy man, and offered to kiss his hand. But Francis would not suffer it, saying: "It is I, who ought to kiss those hands of yours, consecrated as they are, by offering the Divine Sacrifice for three-and-thirty years." His words astonished the other, for they were mutual strangers. He asked for an interview; during which, he became abundantly satisfied of the Saint's spiritual illumination. He returned to the Holy Father, like the Queen of Saba from Solomon, declaring that all reports of the hermit fell short of the reality he had witnessed.

The Rule of the Minims was submitted to Pope Sixtus IV., who approved it, and appointed Francis Superior General. It was confirmed by Alexander VI. and Julius II. The spread of the Order was such, that when the holy founder died, besides numerous houses in France, Germany,

and Spain, his native Italy counted thirteen convents of these "Least Ones." It was the literal accomplishment of prophecy: "The least shall become a thousand, and a little one a most strong nation: I, the Lord, will suddenly do this thing in its time."*

Besides his wonder-working power, Francis was endowed with the spirit of prophecy. Two or three instances may suffice. Several years before the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, while the daily Sacrifice was still celebrated within the church of St. Sophia, and the Turks not yet on the horizon, he foretold that greatest (perhaps) of disasters, by which Christendom has been afflicted. Again, on the entrance into religion of Jerome Savonarola, he detailed in exact terms, in a letter written from his Calabrian cell, the future labours, influence, misfortunes and death of that celebrated monk and sufferer.

Once more; in Spain, his friars were called the Brothers of Victory; and for this reason. In 1487, Ferdinand V., king of Arragon and Castille, was besieging the Moors in Malaga, a place that had long been in their hands. To fight against these aggressive fanatics, the representatives of all that was anti-Christian and immoral, was a crusade, a holy warfare, encouraged by our Lord's Vicar. But Ferdinand, with so good a cause, had ill success; and his many reverses disposed him to withdraw his troops, and retire. On a sudden, two religious, pale with macerations, clad in the coarse black habit of the Minims, presented themselves in camp. They come from Francis of Paula, who sends an assurance to the king, that in three days he will be master of the place. Ferdinand animates his own faith and that of his followers, and the prophecy is accomplished. The third day, he enters Malaga in triumph; and the Cross replaces the crescent of the misbeliever.

But it is time to see this humble, yet masterful friar, at Plessis-les-Tours, the fortress-palace in which a crafty jealous king, Louis XI., surrounded by a body-guard of four hundred crossbowmen, is keeping his subjects at a distance. There was one power, which Louis of Valois was unable to keep at arm's length: a power that no bolt, shot by his archers, could reach, or stay. That power was —Death.

* Isaias lx. 22.

Abject fear of death marked the declining life of this strange, inconsistent, incalculable character. And truly, unless the Muse of history has played the usual jade's trick of misrepresentation, an imminent launch into the world to come, and proximate appearance at the bar of God, might well be formidable to Louis of France, eleventh of that name. His deeds do not belong to the lives of the Saints, and we may leave them to the historian. But it will not be out of place to survey his character; for it comes in contact with that of the hermit of Calabria.

A writer,* who keeps full in view the obligations of charity, says of him:

"He was a prince of a character quite out of the ordinary track: his intellect of great largeness, penetration, and extent—very skilled in the art of kingcraft. His prudence often degenerated into cunning; and that is saying the least of it. Consummate in dissimulation, he gloried too greatly in that science, and this gave the impression that he was using it continually. Hence, neither his enemies, his neighbours, the princes of the blood, nor even his ministers, placed any trust in him. By nature, neither benevolent nor liberal, he could yet become so, the moment his interest seemed to require it. He counted no cost, when he had to purchase, as his creatures, those who were in the councils of neighbouring princes, or to gain over such men of mark as surrounded them; to win the governors of strong places, to corrupt ambassadors, or to embarrass his enemies: so that, for the most part, his largesses were not so much tokens of his friendship, as of the need he had of those on whom he bestowed them. It was much easier to incur his disfavour than to merit his good will. He seldom forgave: he punished severely.

"To judge by outward signs, this was a highly religious prince. He confessed every week, undertook very frequent pilgrimages, had in great honour the Saints' relics, often made presents to churches: but he was not therefore more strictly observant of his word and of his oath, less revengeful, or more trustworthy. Contemplating his conduct as a whole, it would appear that there was less of hypocrisy in

* Father Daniel's *Abridgment of the History of France*, vol. iii. 523, 524.

his devotion, than of a certain eccentricity of view, that made him neglect the essential of piety, and satisfy himself with exterior practices—made him scrupulous about trifles, while his conscience was no restraint to him in matters of the utmost importance."

And now, after twenty years of such a reign, after deceits and ambitions, cruelties and treacheries, without number, Louis XI. finds himself nearing the portals of the tomb. He fights against the idea; what? die, while an enemy remains to be subdued or over-reached? Not if he can help it. He pours out abject supplications to his physician, to keep him still in life; enriches him for the present, promises him magnificent rewards in the future; if only he can keep together the decaying frame, and prevent the cold unrighteous spirit from escaping into the Unseen.

In vain. The healing art is taxed to its utmost resources; but the king must die.

Now, this is not precisely the penitent whom any confessor would choose, to prepare for the last dread hour. Such, too, is the inward instinct of those who surround the royal couch: for, after all, courtiers as they are, ministers as some of them have been, in executing his crooked, his cruel will, they have the faith, somewhere down in their consciences. But no one is more alive to all this, than the dying man himself. He has deceived others, over and over again; but the voice of Truth now makes itself audible: it is calling, summoning, louder and louder, in trumpet-tones, as if it had borrowed a blast from that of Saint Michael—and it *will* be heard. The demon has a strong clutch: is there any Saint or servant of God, to interpose a yet stronger* intercession?

There is a holy man, they tell his Majesty, living his mortified life, among the folds of the Calabrian hills. He is a poor friar, no learned theologian, not even a priest; but somehow, he seems to get whatever he asks of God.

"Why, then," thinks Louis, while earth, and time, while crowns, enemies, schemings, tortuous manœuvrings, all are slipping away before his eyes, "why cannot he prolong my life? Or, short of that, why cannot he smooth a passage

* 1 St. John iv. 4.

for my soul? Half my kingdom, for the presence of that poor hermit of Calabria!"

Then the world saw a wonderful sight indeed: the most powerful sovereign of the day sending special ambassadors, not to a crowned potentate, but to kiss, as it were, the sandalled feet of the poor cowled and corded friar of Paula. The king of France intreated him to come; he would heap favours upon him and his new institute; he would do anything, everything. Only let him come, and pray, and keep from him the shadow of death!*

Francis was little concerned about patronage or protection. If the foundation of the Minims were from God, *He* would give the increase. And, as for the king's intense yearning to live, it presented no appeal to one who "died daily," and whose yearning was "to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."† Perhaps the embassy missed its cue; spoke of the king's temporal life, rather than of his soul. The Saint declined to accompany them.

Appeal was then made to the king of Naples, who added the weight of his authority and intreaties. Francis was still unmoved. He could not hear the dying king's confession; his humility forbade him to think he could do him as much good as others. As to the royal life, "We all die, and like waters that return no more, we fall down into the earth."‡ He would pray for the king, no doubt, in what he called his poor way; meanwhile, he had to sweep the narrow cloister, wash up the dishes, and help the cook in shelling beans for the friars' dinner.

One final appeal remained. In those days, men owned the common Father of Christendom. The case was therefore carried to Rome; Louis intreated Sixtus IV. to say the word. The Vicar of our Lord bade the Minim to go; and he went at once, without a second thought. He left the delights of his solitude, and the shelling of the beans, to others.

* "He had besought his courtiers and attendants never to pronounce 'that cruel word, death:' and, when they saw the signs of it on him, merely to express it by saying: 'Speak little'" (Guizot, *Histoire de France*, vol. ii. p. 450).

† 1 Cor. xv. 31; Phil. i. 23.

‡ 2 Kings xiv. 14.

His progress through France resembled a royal triumph. Gentle and simple, old and young, clergy and laity alike, pressed forward, crowded round him. They kissed the hem of his garment; they threw themselves before him for his blessing. Whether he would or no—and he certainly would it not—he was the man of the day. True heroic sanctity makes itself felt, like an electric power. Even in such sparks of it as we see, now in our degenerate days, it attracts those whom (like electricity itself) it does not repel. For there are some who love its light: and some again, who get a shock from it, as from a charged jar. They keep at a safe distance, and look upon it as a sort of dynamite, too strong to be comfortable.

The Dauphin, soon to be Charles VIII., with the principal lords of the court, came out as far as to Amboise, to meet the "least" of God's little ones. Heir-apparent, friar, nobles, the mingled cortêge at length came to Plessis-les-Tours. Those jealous gates were flung wide to greet him. The draw-bridge, for once, was lowered without parley or suspicion; the body-guard of archers* and crossbowmen bent no weapon on him as he approached. The king himself, bloodless, emaciated, tottering, came forth, and flung himself at his feet. Oh, help him, help him to live!

Francis had come on a higher errand; to help him to die.

It was very characteristic of king Louis, that, having sent for S. Francis, the long way from Paula to Plessis, he should not quite trust him, after all. He had been so accustomed to play a part, that the idea came into his mind: "What if the hermit can be an actor, in his turn?" It is always so. People judge of others very much by the standard of their own habitual thoughts and lives.

Pensa el ladron
Che todos son
De su condicion.†

* Readers of *Quentin Durward* will not need to be reminded of the band of Scottish Archers whom Louis kept always nearest his person: relying on the fidelity of these foreign attendants, as the later Bourbon kings did on their faithful Swiss. The jealous precautions, again, with which this singular monarch fenced himself at Plessis, have not been exaggerated by Walter Scott. See, among other authorities, the Abbé Chevalier's *Promenades Pittoresques en Touraine* (Tours 1869), pp. 204, 208.

† The cutpurse believes
All men are thieves.

Accordingly, the king so arranged it, that magificent presents were offered to his saintly guest; and, of course, rejected. Francis was not going to enrich his Order: it would remain in all holy observance of Rule, as long as it remained poor. But perhaps devotion to our Blessed Lady will make him relax? he cannot refuse a beautiful image of her, for some of his churches? And a beautiful one was brought, of massive gold, valued at seven thousand ducats. That was nothing to the hermit. He was penetrated with the truth, that the devotion to our Lady most acceptable to her Divine Son and to herself, is the imitation of her virtues. Doubtless, he loved to think of her as the poor maiden of Nazareth. So he sent back the precious golden statue; simply saying, that his devotion was not to a metal, but to the Mother of God. Once more, the king expressly sent him a very large sum, begging him to accept it, and promising that none should know of it. On which Francis exclaimed, with holy indignation and zeal, that his Majesty had much better think of repairing the wrongs he had so long committed, and against so many people, and make efforts to be forgiven.

After these temptations, which were none to the Saint of Paula, Louis, now full of respect and confidence, listened to his powerful exhortations, and by degrees was brought to a better mind. He received the Sacraments with sentiments of great contrition, and died in the arms of S. Francis, calling on the Mother of Mercy to aid him.

"His death occasioned great joy throughout the kingdom. The moment had been impatiently looked for, as a deliverance, and a termination to so many miseries and fears. No king of France, for a long time, had been so great a burden to his people, or been so detested by them."*

So far, for the judgment of man. What may hereafter be revealed as the judgment of God, is hidden from us. Let us not endeavour to raise the veil. He repents effectually, and he only, who does his best to repair the harm his sins have caused, or who has an honest disposition so to do. What efforts Louis XI. may have made in that direction, or with what true dispositions Grace may have

* M. de Barante, *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne.*

favoured him, will then be known, when all things are known.

The new king, Charles VIII,, established the Minims in France, and held in greatest honour their humble founder; by whose intercession he is believed to have won the battle of Fornoue—eight thousand Frenchmen against forty thousand troops of Italy, in 1495. When his third son was born—Dauphin, because of the deaths of two previous sons in infancy—Charles besought S. Francis to stand godfather. Thus, between the throned king and the poor friar was established that spiritual relationship which our forefathers expressed by the term *gossip*.* The child, however, died, like his brothers; and thus happily escaped the perils of royalty.

Convents of the order of Minims arose at Plessis, and at Amboise; the latter, on the spot where Charles, as Dauphin, had met the Saint on his first arrival in France. Anne of Britany gave S. Francis her castle of Nigeon, near Paris, for another convent. When it was founded, two doctors of theology, who had vehemently opposed the Order before the Archbishop of Paris, were so moved by the sight of the Saint, that they received a vocation to join the "least ones," after all. They entered the order in 1506, during the lifetime of S. Francis.

Thenceforward, the houses multiplied. The Blessed Johanna of Valois, daughter of the old king who had passed away, found solace, amid the sorrows of her painful life, in the counsels of the poor Calabrian friar. And it was for those who were called to live in the world, and to do battle there for their souls—for these high personages, and so down through all ranks of lay men and women—that he established his Third Order. It included the reigning king, his successor, Louis XII., the great ladies above-named, and a crowd of others, who were thus enabled to sanctify their souls in the station where Providence had placed them.

For the remaining five-and-twenty years of his life, Francis still dwelt in the country from which his great name-

* God-sib, or related in God. *Sib* is still used in Scotland in the sense of kindred; to be "ower sib" is, to be too nearly related for a marriage to take place between the parties.

sake had derived his name.* There he ripened for glory, in the austere cloisters of his houses at Plessis and Amboise. In the former of these he died, at the age of ninety-one, in 1507. He had been in France since that triumphant entry of his in 1482, three years before the battle of Bosworth, in our own history, and five years before the taking of Malaga from the Turks by his intercessory prayer, as narrated above.

On the Good Friday of 1507, he assembled, for the last time, his friars round him; gave them a few touching exhortations, with his blessing: then asked for Extreme Unction, pressed the crucifix to his lips, and breathed forth his holy soul, with a prayer of true Franciscan tenderness and simplicity:

"O gentle Jesu! Thou good Shepherd, preserve the just, and justify sinners; have compassion on all the faithful departed, and look favourably on me, though I am but a most unworthy sinner!"

The Saint of Paula, "the least of the Least Ones," was canonised by Leo X., in 1519, his feast being appointed for the second of April.

COLLECT.

O God, the exaltation of the humble, who hast raised Blessed Francis, confessor, to the height of glory of Thy Saints, grant us, we beseech Thee, that by his merits and imitation, we may happily gain the rewards promised to the lowly. Through our Lord.

* S. Francis of Assisi appears to have been the first to whom that Christian name was given. His father, Bernardone, had commercial transactions with France, and thence gave to his son a name, which is found among English-speaking races as a surname—"French"—analogous to the surnames English, Welsh, Norman, and others. In early times, one great way of distinguishing a stranger was by denoting the country from which he came; as might be shown by innumerable examples. Another was, to call him from some personal peculiarity, differencing the outward man, and not always of a favourable or complimentary kind.

BLESSED* JULIANA, VIRGIN,

PROMOTER OF THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

APRIL 5.

A.D. 1257.

"QUOMODO *fiet istud?*" "*Ecce, ancilla Domini;*" these were the two responses made by the humblest and most powerful of virgins, to the great announcement. Mary, in that moment on which the fate of the world hung, saw nothing in herself to correspond with that mighty word, brought to her by the "Strength of God."† But, when assured it is the Divine Will, and that so it is to be, then comes the second answer,

* The Bollandist (Ap. 5) in his notice of the life of this holy virgin, enumerates no less than six grave authors, Rosweyd among the number, who have given her the title Saint; and proceeds to offer an equal number of independent arguments, derived from ancient public monuments, popular *cultus*, etc. in justification of the title. Her name is invoked in a Premonstratensian litany, among the Saints of the order. A well in her birth-place, Retienna, is named S. Juliana's well. A statue of immemorial antiquity, in the church of Montcornillon, representing her with a monstrance in her hand, is placed against a pillar at the entrance to the choir; matching one of S. Augustine, the patron of the church, on the opposite side. It is venerated with candles, genuflexions, and votive offerings: and, on the patronal feast, receives a garland of flowers from the authorities of Liége, equally with the statue of the sainted bishop of Hippo himself. These are three of the Bollandist's six proofs. Moreover, the title of her Mass in the Roman Missal runs thus: "Prima die libera post V. Aprilis, B. Julianæ Virg. Sanctæ nuncupatæ."

To assign to her, therefore, the title of Saint, would only be following great authorities. Nevertheless, in obedience to the spirit of the Church, and especially to the injunction of Urban VIII., the other and safer appellation is adhered to in these pages.

† Gabriel, *Fortitudo Dei.*

out of the depths of the same unfaltering acquiescence with that Will:—"Ecce ancilla Domini: fiat"—"Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it."

And the true daughters of Mary, virginal devoted souls, powerful too, in the very measure of their humility, have re-echoed their Mother and Queen in both these responses, when our Lord has called them to some great, some seemingly impossible, function. They have, naturally, been astonished: they have questioned—not the Divine power that gives strength to the weak, but—the possibility of the call coming to *them*, and not being a delusion of the enemy. *Quomodo fiet istud?* But they have been re-assured, as the prophet Jeremias was, when he declined the prophetic office,* and called himself a mere child:

"Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid at their presence: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

Thus, S. Catherine of Siena, rather more than a century after the death of the Juliana of our present thoughts, went to Gregory XI. at Avignon, and besought him, in God's name, to remove himself and his court back to Rome.

Thus, two centuries ago, B. Margaret Mary Alacoque, a nun retired and recollected, receives the commission, during her cloistral prayer, to make known, far and wide, the ardent love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the souls of His redeemed.

And this holy virgin, Juliana of Liege, a poor orphan brought up in a hospital, what great work was *she* commissioned to do? She was, it may be said, to go through the world with an empty monstrance in her hand; knocking at the doors of episcopal palaces and the gates of universities, and asking why nothing was done, why no especial solemnity had been established, to inflame men's hearts with love for Jesus in the Sacrament of His Love?

This poor girl seemed to be consecrated as an apostle of the Eucharistic Presence; she was to promote a new feast—the "Feast of God"—throughout the world-wide Church. No wonder, if she cried out to Him who thus prompted her: "A, a, a, I cannot speak, for I am a child."†

* Jer. i. 6. † *Ibid.*

Nor if, with Moses, she asked: "Who am I, that I should go?"* Nor if even, by twenty years' delay, she ventured as far, in expostulation, as "I beseech Thee, Lord, send whom Thou wilt send." But the virtual answer was, as in all triumphs of the weak and the poor, by the Arm of Omnipotence: "Who made man's mouth? or who made the dumb and the deaf, the seeing and the blind? Did not I? Go, therefore, and I will be in thy mouth, and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak." So, there was nothing for it, at last, but *Ecce ancilla Domini.*

Not far from the gates of Liege is a high and steep ridge of hill, called, in French, Montcornillon, and something Flemish on the tongue of the good folks of the neighbourhood. This hill had two religious houses; one at the foot, the other on the height. With this second we are not concerned, except to say that it seems first to have belonged to the Premonstratensian Order, afterwards to the Carthusians. The house at the foot of the hill enters more nearly into our present thoughts. It had been founded by the citizens of the fine old Catholic city near it, shortly before the birth of that holy virgin Juliana, who was to be a poor girl nurtured there in early life, then Prioress, and ultimately its chief ornament through all time. It was founded to serve a double purpose; being a leper hospital, and also a place of safe refuge and Christian education for young orphan or destitute girls. The rule of S. Augustine was observed there. A certain number of priests and others recited the divine office in choir, and the place was under the care of a Prioress, who, in turn, owed obedience to an ecclesiastical Superior. It was one of many such charitable and religious foundations† that flourished in these western provinces of the Church's dominion, during the ages of Faith. Blessed were the lepers and the poor, who were received into such homes of tender Christian charity — a sort of Abraham's bosom, even in this hard world. But the brethren of Dives have managed to get hold of a good many of these houses of prayerful good works; they have turned out Lazarus, to arrange for their own drawing-rooms and stables instead.

* Exod. iii. 11, iv. 11, 12, 13.
† Jac. de Vitriaco, Hist. Occid. c. 25.

Juliana was born near Liege in 1193, and was brought up at Montcornillon from her fifth year, under the care of one of the Sisters, well named Sapientia. A contemporary biographer of Juliana, whose name has perished from the earth, though he has left the pious prayer that it may be in the Book of Life,* has recorded with pious affectionateness the virtues and the trials of her childish days. Such details may be trivial in themselves; nevertheless, they form a promise of more developed sanctity in after years. They are like the first shootings of the buds in springtide.

The mode in which Juliana received her mission, was striking and significant. A tender, ardent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament had marked her, from the first. She communicated frequently, at a time when frequent communion seems to have been the exception. She was so desolate at being unable to hear daily Mass, that the hospital sisters, who had the charge of this vessel of election, built her a little cell, to which she retired for prayer, and union with the Adorable Sacrifice, at the hour when it was celebrated in the Church of S. Martin at Liege. But more distinctly, from the age of sixteen, she always saw, in her prayer, an orb of light, like the full harvest-moon; complete, all but at one point. There was a portion wanting in the circle, that marred its beauty and perfectness. She believed this vision to be a temptation from him "who transformeth himself into an angel of light:"† for holy souls, when visited with any such favours as lie out of the beaten track of humble prayer, tend to be disquieted, lest perhaps these may be delusions, to draw them toward the pitfall of spiritual pride. Juliana besought our Lord to deliver her from this possible illusion; yet there was the moon, still before the eyes of her soul. What could it mean? Why all-but perfect, yet failing of its full completeness? Then she turned her prayer into a strong petition that she might understand what she could not help seeing, and hoped might be from God, after all.

So it was given to her to know, that this orb represented the round of the Church's festivals and devotions through the Christian year. There was one defective place, still needing to be filled. For among all those various holy

* See the verses below. † 2 Cor. xi. 14.

days, no feast was specially set apart to honour with rejoicings the adorable Sacrament.

There was, indeed, Holy Thursday, the very night of the Last Supper, "the night in which He was betrayed;" and all the lessons, and psalms, and antiphons on that great Thursday referred, of course, to the marvel of love and power in the guest-chamber of the Pasch which He kept with His disciples. But Holy Thursday is an integral part of the Passion; the very threshold of the solemn morning when the Church vests herself in widow's weeds for the death of Him who gave life to man from His Cross. That day looks out upon Gethsemani; it has its *Tenebræ*, with wailing antiphons, and tapers extinguished one by one. No bell sounds at the consecration of the Lord's Body; and, when consecrated, It is borne to a sepulchre. Still, therefore, the orb was incomplete; the Church and her faithful people needed yet a high festival that should enshrine the words: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Yes; the faithful lover of "Emmanuel, God with us," of "the Word made flesh and dwelling among us," of Him who pledges His word, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them"—needed more than that Thursday of gratitude mingled with sorrow. Every loving heart needed a day when the King shall come forth on His royal progress, attended by rejoicing multitudes adoring Him, kneeling round Him, craving His benediction. A feast of joy and flowers, of waxen tapers burning unquenched in the genial summer air; a day of glad processions and chantings, wreaths of fragrant incense flung from the swinging thuribles, tapestry enlivening the windows of Catholic cities, with carpets spread below; while the choicest blossoms of the fair season are scattered beneath the steps of the coped and stoled priest, because he bears the glittering monstrance, and because *that* enshrines the Presence of the Word Incarnate. All this was needed, and as much more as human skill could devise, or art could design, or wealth could lavish, in token of man's glad response to the Love of condescension, yet of divine yearning, that makes Him sweetly whisper to the soul: "My delights are to be with the children of men." *

* Prov. viii. 31.

To evoke this from the Church's spiritual instinct, to embody and stereotype it by a perpetual recurring festival, "a day of memorial, and a feast to the Lord with an everlasting observance,"* was the work committed to a humble retired maiden, who desired nothing but that her life should be "hid with Christ in God."†

(1) First, then, as to Juliana herself.

The fame of her sanctity grew with her growth. Persons of station, ecclesiastics as well as seculars, began to frequent the hospital-convent of Montcornillon, to hear her speak of the things of God. This not only broke-in upon her recollection, but troubled her humility; and she endeavoured in every way to escape it. When forced, by charity, thus to occupy a position of teaching, she used, especially in after-life, to compare the distress it caused her, to the sufferings of purgatory. During her younger days, when asked by distinguished visitors to speak of God, with all humility and modesty she would answer: "I am the cook's assistant, and the sisters' serving-maid; but there are some things I *do* know. I can milk the cows, and feed the chickens, and do such menial work as this: what would you have me know besides? But *you*, who are able to speak much and perfectly about God, I intreat you to do so, and I will listen to you with all attention." On the other hand, with the poor and the lowly, she would discourse with great unction, and power about God, and the salvation of the soul; proportioning her words to the intelligence and spiritual condition of her hearers.

Once, a person of consideration came to see Juliana, and began to ask her to recount to him something that our Lord had communicated to her. She answered, with much humility, that she knew very little that was good, and that she was a great sinner. On this, he enumerated a catalogue of sins, from which the servant of God had most certainly been preserved; and asked, perhaps half tauntingly, whether she considered herself guilty of these. "My lord," she meekly answered: "very possibly I am guilty of every sin." On which, her visitor departed, with no little indignation; disappointed at hearing none of the sublime things he expected: somewhat as Herod began by

* Exod. xii. 14. † Col. iii. 3.

expecting a miracle from our Lord, and ended by mocking Him. The sisters, too, not quite so supernatural as herself, were grieved, and felt some confusion, at the occurrence. They asked her, with a degree of reproach, how she could have the conscience to say such things of herself?

But what was Juliana's answer? "Because I have not the immense suffering and anguish of heart that I ought to have, for the sins of the whole human race, by which Almighty God is continually offended, I seem to myself to be guilty of every sin." "Truly," exclaims her biographer, on narrating this, "a virgin of perfect devotion; a model of solid religious perfection! Alas, how few remain after her, who imitate these virtues! Few are there, in these our days, who seem worthily to lament the wounds they inflict on *themselves* by their own sins; fewer still, who endeavour to imitate Juliana in mourning over the sins of others!"

Carefully self-concealed, this holy virgin, all the while, beside her supernatural gifts, possessed no small measure of human acquirement. She had a familiar acquaintance both with Latin and French; and she was a constant, delighted student of the works of S. Augustine and S. Bernard. These, however, were means to the end; not used for intellectual enjoyment, but as the steps of an ascending scale, to draw nearer to God.

(2) And now, as to the progress of the work given her to do.

Twenty years after that distinct revelation had been made to her, and having lived, meanwhile, a long time as a religious at Montcornillon, Juliana was chosen prioress of the house. Then, at length, she took courage, and disclosed the matter to a venerable and pious canon of S. Martin's at Liege, named John of Lausanne. Juliana entreated him to consult upon it some approved theologians. He undertook the task, and executed it with zeal. Among those before whom he laid the question, was the archdeacon of Liege: this was James Pantaleon of Troyes, afterwards bishop of Verdun, then patriarch of Jerusalem, finally Pope, under the title of Urban IV. It will be seen how he interested himself in establishing the festival, when he had ascended the pontifical throne. The bishop of Cambrai, also, with the

chancellor of the church and university of Paris, Hugh of Saint-Cher, provincial of the Dominicans, and other doctors of theology, all agreed that it was meet and right, and conducive to the welfare of the Church, to establish the Feast of the most Holy Sacrament.

In 1246, that is, full sixteen years after the good canon had first been consulted, Robert bishop of Liege, in a diocesan synod, decreed the establishment of the solemn festival in his diocese. But he was removed by death, before its final ratification; and the only immediate effect of his pious intention was, that the canons of S. Martin's began and continued an annual celebration of the feast. Of course, they had to encounter a large share of the misunderstanding and obloquy which attends most works destined to promote the Divine praise.*

"A thousand years are, with the Lord, as one day." He was pleased to allow delays, one after another, to intervene, before this feast of His love should be recognized among men.

Meanwhile, Juliana had to undertake what was yet more unusual, and more repugnant to her humble nature, than meekly to ask a priest to consult the learned. She was moved to compose an Office of the Blessed Sacrament. It must be left to others to say whether any portions of this were incorporated by S. Thomas Aquinas in that unrivalled office for the feast, which he afterwards composed by order of Urban IV. But Juliana's way of writing was in one point akin to that of the Angelic Doctor. It was not the work of mere intellect or study: the light on the page shone from above. Knowledge and perception were infused, in answer to prayer. A pious simple youth, named John, was employed about the hospital; neither theologian nor priest. Juliana summoned him to aid her. Their mode of procedure would have been extravagance and illusion, had it not been, (we must suppose), a special suggestion from Heaven. Juliana seems to have dictated no word; she simply engaged with her whole soul in prayer. As she prayed, John wrote down what

* S. Philip Neri was accustomed to ask, when he heard of any new and pious project: "Is it much opposed?" as reckoning this an encouraging symptom.

her prayer had inwardly gained for him; and there was the Office complete.

It was admired and approved by the theologians to whom it was shown; the Dominican provincial, among others. He was now Cardinal, with the title of Santa Sabina, and had come into Germany as legate. Being at Liege, he examined the Office closely, and expressly approved it. The Bishop of Liege adopted it, and caused copies to be circulated among his clergy. The canons of S. Martin's doubtless chanted it in choir, until the office composed by S. Thomas was authorized for every office-book in accordance with the Roman rite.

And now, the mission of Juliana's life was accomplished. She had given the first impulse to a movement that was to have its final glorious result, two generations after she had passed away. But, before that, she was to drink of the chalice of suffering. Corpus Christi! It was the Body of the Divine Sufferer, whose adoration she had promoted: and one who had been drawn so near to It in devotion, must have some share in the anguish of His Soul. An unworthy priest was appointed as Superior over the community at Montcornillon; and he set himself against every movement of the prioress toward salutary reforms. She had to yield to the storm. With the most fervent of her community, she was driven forth, to remain for a while with her friend Eva, a recluse in a cell by S. Martin's church. Their lives there, for three months, must have been very like those of the early Christians in the catacombs; but at least they had the consolation of hearing the office of the Blessed Sacrament, and praying before the Divine Presence.

The unworthy prior being deposed for his offences, Juliana and her sisters returned to their convent. But he took possession once more, and they had to go forth again. A company of poor religious, without resources, they journeyed afoot on the high roads; driven from place to place, till at length Juliana, weak and ailing, felt her end draw near, in a cell near the church "aux Fossées." She died there, in 1257, at the age of sixty-six:—died without holy Viaticum,* and died ignorant (unless she knew super-

* In this respect, she was singularly like her great namesake, S. Juliana of Falconieri. Both were prevented by their illness from

naturally) whether her ardent desires for the celebration of the "Feast of God" should be accomplished, or come to nought.

Among the wonderful things recorded of this holy servant of God after her decease, one is so characteristic of her life-long devotion to the Adorable Eucharist, that it may be given here, in the language of her contemporary and anonymous biographer.

"A certain person," he says, "whose life was one of tried and assured repute, and who was much attached to Juliana while the virgin of Christ was yet alive, fell into a state of weakness, in which she greatly longed for wine, and food delicately prepared. On the vigil of the solemnity of the Blessed Sacrament, when she had composed her feeble limbs to repose, it seemed to her that the virgin of Christ stood by her, and said: 'Prepare thyself, in order to merit the favour which God will bestow on thee to-morrow.' Now, the said person, thus admonished in her sleep, did all that lay in her power, and neglected not to prepare her inmost soul for the favour that was to come to her. And, as she was fervently engaged in prayer, at the time of Mass, on the day of the solemnity itself, she passed at once into an ecstasy: and she beheld, and lo, the Lord Jesus, arrayed in sacerdotal vestments, was celebrating the Most Venerable Mass, and His handmaid Juliana serving him with her virginal hands. And she who was in this ecstasy seemed to herself to approach the altar; when the Great High Priest, with His virgin ministering to Him, gave her deliciously to drink from a chalice of rare beauty. So perfectly was all this realized, that when she came to herself, she was so inebriated* with the abundance of divine grace, and satiated with the torrent of heavenly sweetness, that those longings for food and wine, which had been caused by her bodily weakness, were dispelled by the superabundant and over-mastering refreshment given to her soul."†

swallowing the Sacred Host. B. Juliana of Liege expired in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, which the priest held before her sight; while in the other case, the dying Saint, urgently desiring that our Lord should be brought to her, was miraculously communicated. See her life, June 19.

* Ps. xxxv. 9.

† See this beautiful life, given in the Bollandists, April 5.

Two or three years after Juliana had passed to her reward, Eva the recluse, her constant friend, who is said to have shared in her revelations, intreated the bishop of Liege to move the Supreme Pontiff for the establishment of the festival. God still chose the weak things of the world, and the most unlikely instruments, for His great designs: one poor and humble virgin stepped into the place vacated by another. The elevation of the former archdeacon of Liege to the chair of Peter seemed to afford a favourable moment; and, as Urban IV., he issued a Bull * in 1264, extending to the whole Church the feast which had been so perseveringly observed by the canons of S. Martin's. Let us, if we find ourselves in Liege, go and visit our Lord in that church; for it may be called the mother-church and cradle of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

The Holy Father at the same time sent to Eva a paternal letter of congratulation on the accomplishment of her pious desires. And yet—mysterious are the ways of the Eternal!—Urban IV. died at Perugia on the second of October, that same year; and under his successors, for more than forty years, the Bull was not carried into effect. But a thousand years are with the Lord, as one day. God crowned, at least, the merit and good intentions of those who had thus united their best efforts. At length, after so many delays, Clement V. confirmed the Bull of Urban at the Council of Vienne, in presence of the ambassadors of England, France and Arragon. The Feast was definitely instituted in 1316, by Pope John XXII.

We may close this brief account of a great event in the Church, by paraphrasing in blank verse, however poorly, a passage of good Latin prose from the pen of B. Juliana's biographer, who apparently had known her during life. By this aspiration for himself he concludes his most edifying notice.

> Forget not, O blest virgin, those whom once
> Thou favoured'st here, on earth's dim trial-ground!
> Ever such gracious task was thine; to cheer,
> Rouse the faint-hearted, the imperill'd aid:
> By word, by work, and strength of pleading prayer
> All wert thou, unto all. If such thy grace
> While yet a pilgrim—now thou hast gain'd home,

* Known by its opening words: *Transiturus de hoc mundo.*

And enter'd the great power of thy Lord,*
Avail'st thou more; now thy large charity
That burn'd on earth, even with consuming zeal,
Waxing to one full-orbèd love, hath made thee
A sun-like soul, amid Heaven's countless suns.
There, resting on the Centre—yea, with Him
Grown to one spirit—from that Fount of love
Perennial, fathomless, is thine deriv'd.
Waft it o'er all thy suppliants, here beneath!
Among them, one poor client, he whose pen
Essayed thy clear soul's portraiture, whose youth
Squander'd on self, has been thro' after years
Scantly redeem'd, needs thy devoutest prayer.
Blest Juliana! move the Heart Divine,
As this work's guerdon, (if His glory aught
Hath brightened by such record of thy grace)
To bless the sinful scribe, and to enrol
His name within the golden Book of Life
That in so fair a page enshrines thy own!

COLLECT.

Hear us, O God of our salvation; that, as we rejoice in the festival of Blessed Juliana, Thy virgin, so we may be instructed by her pious and devout affections of soul. Through our Lord.

* Ps. lxx. 15.

SAINT GEORGE, MARTYR,

PATRON OF ENGLAND.

APRIL 23.

ABOUT A.D. 303.

It is exaggerating Bishop Challoner's meditation on this Saint, to represent him as saying: "Consider first, that we know nothing whatever about S. George."

Even if the Bishop had stated it thus broadly, no small fruit might have been gathered from the consideration. For many of the Saints of God are hidden in the hollow of His hand, to be manifested at the Last Day. Some, indeed, are brought into prominence, seemingly almost by accident, if accident could be in such a case. They have been raised to station and influence in the household of God; "ruling over the present people, and by the strength of wisdom instructing the people in most holy words. . . All these have gained glory in their generations, and were praised in their days."* Some of them have founded religious Orders, have been the authors of permanent institutions of mercy, and thus became fathers of a spiritual succession. "They that were born of them have left a name behind them, that their praises might be related."

On the other hand, "there are some, of whom there is no memorial: who are perished, as if they had never been." Their "life is hid with Christ in God." Not only inasmuch as the true life of every soul is interior, and judged by the Lord of all according to that soul's measure of union with Himself; but such obscure Saints have literally passed away from this visible scene, and left no

* Ecclus. xliv. 4.

trace, or scarcely a trace, by which men could recognize them. His spiritual creation glorifies Him, nevertheless, and works out its own law of perfection and happiness, whether in sunshine or in shade. What is mere shadow to the preceptions of this dark earth will in many cases be found to have been radiant, all along, in the eyes of the heavenly watchers. Myriads of Saints will one day prove to have afforded, through life, examples of S. Paul's seeming paradox: "Unknown, and yet known." *

The Church knows more about S. George, however, than is commonly supposed. Meanwhile, the caution with which Ribadeneira proceeds in his account of the Saint is so wise, that his words may well be reproduced. He says:

"Among other things whereby heretics have endeavoured to obscure the glory of the Saints, and the brightness of the Catholic Church, one hath been, to write the lives of some renowned martyrs of our Lord, and interlace them so with fables and prodigious tales, that those who read them may think them incredible, and judge those whose lives are thus written, neither to have been Saints, nor any ways worthy to be held for such. This the Sixth Synod doth testify, commanding such books not to be published or read, but to be burnt. The same also appears by a decree of Pope Gelasius, which he made concerning apocryphal books; 'which in the Roman Church,' saith he, 'are not to be read, because heretics composed them:' and amongst such books he reckoneth the martyrdom of S. George, whose life we are writing. So that by this ordinance of S. Gelasius we come to know that S. George's life and martyrdom was written by heretics, and how that life is forbidden to be read, although we know not which it is, nor who writ it.† And for this reason, in the Roman

* 2 Cor. vi. 8.

† "Reynolds and Echard blush not to confound him with George, the Arian usurper of the see of Alexandria, the infamous persecutor of S. Athanasius and the Catholics, whom he endeavoured to dragoon into Arianism, by butchering great numbers, banishing their bishops, &c., with the utmost barbarity, till the Gentiles, exasperated by his cruelties and scandalous behaviour, massacred him under Julian. The stories of the combat of S. George and the magician Athanasius, and the like trumpery, come from the mint of the Arians, as Baronius takes notice" (Butler).

Breviary, reformed by Pius V., there are no proper lessons of S. George, nor any mention made of his life and martyrdom; because there is nothing extant of the manner of his life and martyrdom that is certain: and the Church of Rome avoideth and detesteth, as a pestilence, whatsoever savoureth of the doctrine or deceit of heretics."

He then mentions two ancient Greek lives of the Saint, given by Lipomani, Bishop of Verona, who says that neither of them was condemned by Pope Gelasius, "but that they are approved by the Eastern Churches, and held for sound and true." Surius inserted them in his second volume. Baronius, however, after examining these two lives, discovered in them some things not conformable to truth. "For which reason," continues Ribadeneira, "I had once determined to leave out S. George's life, and imitate therein the Roman Breviary, fearing to write anything of Saints that is not warrantable and secure."

This wholesome fear taught him to select out of these lives only what appeared to be certain, and of edification. In the facts, therefore, which follow, we need not apprehend anything adverse either to the orthodox faith, or to historic probability.

S. George, then, was born at Cappadocia, of noble and Christian parents. His mother was a native of Palestine, where she had a considerable estate, to which her son was heir. After his father's death, they both went to live there. The young man, "being of an active and vigorous disposition, strong and able, followed the wars; and for his great valour was made a tribune, or marshal of the field, in the army of Diocletian the Emperor, who had a great affection for S. George, not knowing that he was a Christian, thinking to make use of him in his greatest and hardest encounters." His courage and conduct soon caused him to be promoted to a higher rank. But when the Emperor began to persecute the Christians, S. George laid aside the marks of his dignity, threw up his commission and posts, and complained to Diocletian himself of his severities and edicts of blood.

"By S. George's discourse, the Emperor and all the company understood he was a Christian; and they laboured all they could to draw him from it, by setting before his

eyes the flourishing condition of his youth, his nobility, riches, the favours and good turns which the Emperor had already done him, and many more and greater, which he was in a fair way to get: the dangers, miseries, and loss of honours, goods, and life, which infallibly he was to expect by being refractory, and refusing to sacrifice to the gods, as Diocletian commanded."

That is, the firmness of the martyr was assailed by just the same persuasions as are used to-day by well-meaning friends, when any soul, moved by a special grace, deliberates on the great question: To stay, or not to stay, outside the Church—to remain in Egypt, or to make its way into the land of Gessen.*

History repeats itself; especially the world-long history of the never ending, still beginning contest between truth and falsehood, darkness and light. On the enemy's side, the great weapon is persecution, of one sort or another. The chronicles of the martyrs are in this respect like the Acts of the Apostles, and they, again, like the Books of the Machabees, which refer back to Kings and Paralipomenon, and they to Pharaoh and the Exodus, and so up to the patriarchs, till we arrive at the long century of time occupied by Noe in building his ark. Scoffing, persecution, angry surprise, intolerant rebuke, disappointed family or personal pride, threats of disgrace, disinheritance, disownment—or, harder to withstand—tearful persuasions, sorrowing caresses, pleadings that others may be considered, that a family may not be disgraced, its happy circle not be broken, nor a dead father's example and dying injunctions set at nought, nor a promising career nipped in the bud, nor a leap taken in the dark that will certainly be regretted—pleadings to wait awhile, to reconsider, just to read this book, just to see that expositor of a false system, just to promise that for a certain definite time no move shall be made.

Oh, how many chances and powerful influences are arrayed against a poor weak soul, that feels, like Abraham, it *must* go forth; against an affectionate, lacerated heart that is branded as unfeeling, against a humble, self-mistrustful conscience that must needs be thought arrogant and wilful!

* Exodus x. 23.

Certainly, the conversion of an individual soul from Paganism to Christianity, or from a maimed, uncrucified, so-called Christianity to the true Faith and Cross of Christ —these instances of "the change of the Right Hand of the Most High," wherever they occur, whether before the days of Constantine or after "United Italy," are nothing short of miracles of grace. And how fruitful a consideration, if thoughtful minds could only be got to weigh the exact parallel between the two cases: Pagan and Protestant opposition, Christian and Catholic conversion. The *equuleus* and the spiked scourges are now represented by a lip of quiet English scorn; Diocletian is represented by the sneer of London society. Why is the parallel so exact? Because the object of the world's hatred is ever one and the same; defined under various names, according to time and circumstance. Its real name is Divine Truth. The essence of man's opposition to it lies in that prophecy of its Divine Author: "You shall be hated by all men for My Name's sake."

"But the stout and valiant captain was nothing daunted or troubled at anything they could say or do to him; but on the contrary, looking upon the Emperor, spoke in this manner to him:

"'It were better for you, O Diocletian, to know and adore the true God, and to offer to Him sacrifice of praise. For then He would give you a kingdom far better and more excellent than this which you enjoy at present: for this is frail and transitory, and endeth in a moment, with all that is in it; seeing whatever is in the world is of its own nature brief, and vanisheth in our hands, and can afford little help or comfort to those who possess it. And since I have come to understand as much, and am thoroughly persuaded of this truth, you do but lose your labour and weary yourself in vain, O Emperor, by endeavouring to draw me from the worship of the true God; for I am neither to be won by your promises, nor dismayed by your threats.'

"Scarce can a man believe how terribly the Emperor fretted and stormed at this resolute speech of S. George. He at once commanded him to be seized and carried to prison, and that he should be loaded with bolts and irons, and stretched upon the ground, with a heavy great stone

upon him. The day following, he was brought again before Diocletian, who, after divers questions finding him to be still constant, caused him to be set upon a wheel armed on every side with sharp points of steel, which did tear and rend the Saint's flesh in pieces: in which torment he was comforted and encouraged by a voice from heaven, that spoke thus: 'Fear not, George, for I am with thee;' as also by the sight of a person clothed in white, and gloriously shining, who appearing to him, gave him his hand, embraced him, and inspired into him courage and alacrity in his torments. Some of those who were standing by, beholding the constancy of S. George, were converted to the faith of Christ; among whom were two prætors, worthy men and of great authority, Anatolius and Pretolius, who were beheaded for our Lord. But, as the torments which S. George was put to, increased, so did the patience and greatness of his courage, wherewith he endured them, more and more appear. The joy also of the Christians was augmented, and the confusion of the Gentiles; as also the fury and rage of the Emperor, who knew not what course to take to daunt the blessed martyr, who remained still invincible amid such cruel and unheard-of torments.

"At length, he resolved to speak him fair. Therefore with a sweet and flattering countenance he exhorted him 'not to lose his favours: promising to do great things for him, and to advance him to highest honours and preferments, if he would obey him as his father.' And the Saint, the more to manifest the power of God, said to him: 'If you please, O Emperor, let us go into the temple, and see the gods you adore.' And the Emperor, being out of himself for joy, believing that George was now come to himself and had changed his mind, commanded both Senate and populace to resort to the temple, to be spectators and witnesses of the sacrifice which George was to offer.

"When all assembled in the temple, and had their eyes and minds fixed upon the Saint, he approached near the statue of Apollo, and stretching forth his hand, said: 'Wilt thou have me offer sacrifice to thee?' and withal made the sign of the Cross. And presently,* the devil

* *i.e.* immediately; as p. 112, l. 40, where the word is altered.

that was in that idol, crieth out: 'I am no god, neither is there any other God beside Him Whom you preach.' Then replies the Saint: 'How darest thou stay here in my presence, who acknowledge and adore the true and living God?' And as soon as the Saint had spoken this, there was heard a most hideous screech and howling, which came from the mouths, or rather from the hollow places, of the idols; and they all fell down to the ground, and were broken in pieces. The priests, seeing their miserable idols thus destroyed, stirred up the people, who in a mutiny laid hands upon the Saint, bound him, and gave him many blows; then called upon the Emperor 'to despatch that magician, and take his life, before they come to lose their own for seeing their gods so basely affronted.' And the Emperor, moved both by their clamours and by his fierce and impious cruelty, as also because a multitude of Gentiles, seeing their idols hurled down and broken into small pieces by the powerful prayers of S. George, believed and confessed Christ, gave sentence that he should have his head cut off, before the mischief spread further.

"The Saint being brought to the place of execution, desired the officers to grant him a little time to pray; which when they had granted, lifting up his eyes towards Heaven, fetching a deep sigh* from the bottom of his heart, he prayed thus aloud:

"'My Lord God, Who art before all ages, and Who hast chosen me for Thy service from my childhood; Thou Who art the only and true hope of Christians, and secure refuge of Thy servants, and a most rich and perpetual treasure of all that confide in Thee; Who dost great favours and graces to those who love Thee, even before they ask:—hear me, O Lord! and since by Thy mercy Thou hast given me strength and patience to suffer so many torments, and to confess Thy Holy Name, receive my soul now, and place it in those Thy eternal mansions,

* Neither for fear, nor for regret at departing out of life in the first flower of his age, but rather from the deep yearning desire for the sight and possession of God, now so near. *Sitivit anima mea ad Deum, fortem, vivum: quando veniam, et apparebo ante faciem Dei?* (Psalm xli. 3.)

where Thy elect do dwell. Pardon this blind people what they have done against me, and against others Thy servants; and give them light, that they may come to know themselves and Thee; since Thy will is, that all men should be saved. Stretch forth Thy hand to all that call upon Thee and ask Thy grace, and give them a holy fear and an inflamed charity; that so, loving Thee above all things, they may imitate Thy Saints and follow their footsteps, and, together with the same Saints, obtain of Thee Thy kingdom, glory, and eternal happiness. Amen.'

"Having ended his prayer, upon his knees, he stretched forth his sacred neck to be severed from his shoulders by the sword, and died in the Lord, on the three-and-twentieth day of April, in the reign of the aforesaid Diocletian. He was martyred in Persia, in the city Diospolis; yet others say in Armenia, in the town called Melitena.*

"The martyrdom of S. George is very famous and honourably solemnized in all the Churches of the East and West; and by the Grecians he is commonly styled, 'The Great Martyr S. George.' S. German, Bishop of Paris, returning from the pilgrimage he made to Jerusalem, brought with him an arm of S. George, which the Emperor Justinian gave him as a most precious treasure; and he placed it in S. Vincent's Church in Paris. His head is kept at Rome, in a church built to his honour, and called from his name: being placed there by Pope Zacharias, as it is written in the Book of the Bishops of Rome. S. Gregory, Pope, repaired a church of this holy martyr, as himself writeth in the sixty-and-eighth Epistle of the fourth Book. The other arm of S. George was translated to Cologne, and God hath wrought by it many and great miracles, as is to be seen in the Acts of S. Anno, Bishop of Cologne. And S. Gregory, Bishop of Tours, writeth of his reliques and miracles in his book, *De Gloria Martyrum*, chap. 101. Justinian, the Emperor, built a stately and fine church in honour of S. George. Kings

* Others, again, assert that his martyrdom took place at Lydda, the Old Testament Lod (1 Paral. viii. 12; 2 Esdr. xi. 34), a city not far from Joppa (Acts ix. 32). William of Tyre, writing in the twelfth century, says that S. George's tomb was to be seen there, and that the Emperor Justinian built a church there in his honour. This is confirmed by Adrichomius.

in their battles take him for their particular patron and advocate. And the Roman Church useth to call upon S. George, S. Sebastian, and S. Maurice, as special protectors against the enemies of the holy faith."

"The reason why S. George had been regarded as the patron of military men, is partly upon the score of his profession, and partly upon the relation of his appearance to the Christian army in the Holy War, before the battle of Antioch. The success of this battle proving fortunate to the Christians, under Godfrey of Bouillon, made the name of S. George more famous in Europe, and disposed the military men to implore more particularly his intercession. This devotion was confirmed, it is said, by an apparition of S. George to our King, Richard I., in his expedition against the Saracens, which vision, being declared to the troops, was to them a great encouragement, and they soon after defeated the enemy." This last sentence is from Alban Butler, as well as the following.

"There stood formerly in Constantinople five or six churches dedicated to his honour; the oldest of which was always said to have been built by Constantine the Great, who seems also to have been the founder of the church of S. George which stood over his tomb in Palestine. Both these churches were certainly built under the first Christian emperors. In the middle of the sixth age, the Emperor Justinian erected a new church in honour of this Saint at Bizanes, in Lesser Armenia; the Emperor Maurice* founded one in Constantinople. One of the churches of S. George in Constantinople, called Manganes, with a monastery adjoining, gave to the Hellespont the name of 'The Arm of S. George.' To this day, S. George is honoured as principle patron or tutelar Saint by several Eastern nations, particularly the Georgians. The Byzantine historians relate several battles to have been gained, and and other miracles wrought, through his intercession. From frequent pilgrimages to his church and tomb in Palestine, performed by those who visited the Holy Land, his veneration was much propagated over the West. S. Gregory of Tours mentions him as highly celebrated in France in the sixth century. S. Clotildis, wife of Clovis the first

* Consort of S. Pulcheria, Virgin and Empress.

Christian King of France, erected altars under his name. He is at this day the titular Saint of the Republic of Genoa, and was chosen by our ancestors in the same quality under our first Norman kings. Under his name and ensign was instituted by our victorious King Edward III. in 1330, the most noble Order of knighthood in Europe, fifty years before the Knights of S. Michael were instituted in France by Louis XI., eighty years before the Order of the Golden Fleece, and one hundred and ninety before the Order of S. Andrew was set up in Scotland by James V. The Emperor Frederic IV. instituted, in 1470, an Order of Knights in honour of S. George; and an honourable military Order in Venice bears his name."

Butler here gives its true title to one of the most noble of those military orders, which in the days of faith preserved the ideal of the consecrated Christian soldier. A Knight of the Garter is a client of England's tutelary Saint. The Order of the Bath, on the other hand, is so designated from the lustrations that accompanied the Knight's fast and vigil "ere the bright mantle might his limbs enfold." * He was to undergo a kind of chivalrous baptism, on the threshold of a life that was pledged to deeds, not of valour merely, but of Christian self-sacrifice. The preliminary bath was to remind him that his heart was to be kept as pure as his arm was to be strong, in the "good fight of faith." So, likewise, the Order, commonly called of the Garter, whatever circumstance may have given it so grotesque a title, was in truth the Order of S. George. The image of the Saint, wrought in gold, depended from the collar worn by the Sovereign and his Knights, many of them sovereign rulers in their own dominions. This ornament was popularly known as "the George." We all remember how, after the battle of Sedgemoor, which quenched the unrighteous hopes and ambition of Monmouth, the "George" of that unhappy young man was found in a ditch of the bean-field whence he was dragged, a captured rebel.

* Wash thee, and watch thine armour, as, of old,
The champion vow'd of faith and purity,
Ere the bright mantle might his limbs enfold,
Three summer nights outwatch'd the stars on high, &c.
Lyra Apostolica.

When, in 1347, Edward III. chose forty of his lords, as Froissart tells us, to be "Knights of the Blue Garter," he proclaimed a solemn feast of his new Order for the ensuing feast of S. George. Every Knight of that chosen company was bound to wear his blue mantle, with the red cross of S. George, from the first Vespers of the Saint's feast till the following evening. And when, the year after the foundation, Pope Clement VI., at the King's prayer, issued a Bull, constituting the Chapter of S. George in Windsor Castle, which Edward had just completed, for the devotion of those Knights, there was still the same connexion between the Order and the Saint. The banners of the Knights of the Garter hung, and still hang, over their stalls in the richly wrought Chapel of S. George, Windsor. The Garter is accidental,* the memory of the young soldier of Cappadocia is essential, to the Order.

Whether the less worthy origin assigned to an association of Christian champions—religious and devotional in its first days—be indeed authentic, cannot be determined. The legend that asserts it is mentioned by no contemporary writer, and is certainly alien from the temper and feeling of a time when, though chivalry was declining, faith and Christian instinct remained. It is difficult to believe that Clement VI. would have issued his Bull in favour of a company of knights whose badge had such an origin, without adverting to it in reprehension. Hume is probably as correct in historical fact as wholesome in feeling, when he despises the whole account as a "vulgar fable."

Those two characters, S. George and Diocletian, have been now so distinctly set face to face, that we may well have another glance at the Emperor, before concluding this notice of the martyr whom he sent to glory. Diocletian, like so many other persecutors, had several chances given him. There were "Saints in Cæsar's household" † in his day, as in the time of Nero. But, even as the existence and example of Saints in his household did not hinder Nero from the First persecution, so neither was Diocletian

* Camden and others suppose the Order to have been instituted on occasion of the victory obtained by the Black Prince at Creçy, when (it is said) he ordered his garter to be displayed as a signal of battle.

† Phil. iv. 22.

thereby hindered from authorizing the Tenth. Pride, like other sin, can blind men's inner sight, teaching them to put darkness for light, and light for darkness.

S. Paul, indeed, after his conversion, was able to say of himself that he had sincerely thought "he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth." * But it was surely an exceptional case of sincerity in error. He "obtained the mercy of God," because he "did it ignorantly, in unbelief." † Others have been ignorant and unbelieving: they are so now, every day of the week, and therefore they persecute. But their ignorance is vincible, their unbelief culpable. And, as to Diocletian, his daughter Arthemia had been freed from possession of the demon by the prayers of the martyr S. Cyriacus. Pope S. Marcellinus had come before him with a courageous rebuke for his savage persecution, and had yielded himself to a voluntary death. Diocletian had probably heard how S. Peter the exorcist had freed from demoniacal possession Paulina, the daughter of Artemius, keeper of the prison to which the exorcist-martyr was condemned. If so, surely the case of his own daughter must have recurred to his thought, and stirred in his heart something of a prelude to faith. How, again, could he resist the example and personal influence of that noble young soldier, whose manly qualities had once attracted him—S. Sebastian? And now finally comes S. George, to complete the proof, and give him, as it were, the last chance.

But the most wonderful and fearful instance of Diocletian's hardness of heart was when the oracle of Apollo itself proclaimed the holiness of our Lord's disciples. If he had any belief in his system of paganism, here was that system testifying unwillingly to the truth: and he rejects it still. He will neither have Apollo, nor a more Sacred Name.

The whole thing is a terrible commentary on the words of the Evangelist: "They could not believe, because Isaias said again: 'He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted,

* Acts xxvi. 9. † 1 Tim. i. 13.

and I should heal them.'"* Let us take the account, as reported by Alban Butler from Lactantius.†

"While Diocletian was offering victims at Antioch, in 302, in order to consult the entrails for the discovery of future events, certain Christian officers who stood near his person made on their foreheads the immortal sign of the Cross. This disturbed the sacrifices, and confounded the aruspices or diviners, who could not find the ordinary marks they looked for in the entrails of the victims. Upon which, the person set over the diviners declared, that their rites did not succeed because some profane persons (meaning the Christians) had thrust themselves into their assembly. Hereupon Diocletian, in a rage, commanded that not only those who were present, but all the rest of his courtiers, should come and sacrifice to their gods; and ordered those to be scourged who should refuse to do it. He also sent orders to his military officers to require all the soldiers to sacrifice, or, in case of refusal, to be disbanded. Another thing determined Diocletian to follow these impressions, *which one would have imagined should have had a quite contrary effect:* it is mentioned by Constantine the Great, who thus speaks in an edict addressed to the whole Empire, preserved by Eusebius.‡ 'A report was spread that Apollo out of his dark cavern had declared, that certain just men on earth hindered him from delivering true oracles, and were the cause that he had uttered falsehood. For this reason he let his hair grow, as a token of his sorrow; and lamented this evil among men, having thereby lost his art of divination. Thee do I call to witness, Most High God! Thou knowest how I, being then very young, heard the Emperor Diocletian inquiring of his officers, who these just men were: when one of his priests made answer, that they were the Christians; which answer moved Dio-

* S. John xii. 39, 40. "They could not believe," observes the note in the Douay version, "because they would not, saith S. Augustine, Tr. 33 in Johan." And on S. Mark iv. 12, "That seeing they may see," &c. "In punishment of their wilfully *shutting their eyes* (S. Matt. xiii. 15) God justly withdrew those lights and graces, which otherwise He would have given them, for their effectual conversion."

† De Mortibus Persecut. c. x.; Instit. l. iv. c. xxvii.; Butler in Ap. 27.

‡ Vit. Const. l. ii. cc. 50, 51.

cletian to draw his sanguinary sword, not to punish the guilty, but to exterminate the righteous, whose innocence stood confessed by the divinities he adored.'"

How striking, thus to hear a Christian Emperor, himself a convert to the faith, publicly reversing, by imperial decree, the blind and hardened misjudgment of his pagan predecessor! We have here a sort of glimpse, or miniature representation, of how it will be in "the times of the restitution of all things,"* when "that which is high to men"—imperial power arrayed against the truth, and all the fantastic tricks which man in his little brief authority plays against high Heaven—shall be shown, once and for ever, as an "abomination before God."†

And now, a word about that dragon, so intimately connected with S. George in the popular mind. Who, or what, was he? A scaly monster, or some monster of a man, or an abstract principle of evil? The "George" of the Garter represents the Saint on horseback, spearing the horrible writhing form beneath his feet. Butler, whose training and habit of mind tended to reduce some of the Church's beautiful traditions to the dead level of a very cold interpretation,‡ pronounces, *ex cathedrâ*: "This representation is no more than an emblematical figure, purporting that by his faith and Christian fortitude he conquered the devil, called the dragon in the Apocalypse."

It may be so; or it may be that Diocletian was the dragon, and a very sufficient one, surely; as S. Paul calls

* Acts iii. 21.

† S. Luke xvi. 15.

‡ Thus, in his account of the translation of S. Catherine's body to Mount Sinai, Alban Butler quotes, with seeming approval, Archbishop Falconius, who thus dogmatizes: "As to what is said, that the body of this saint was conveyed by angels to Mount Sinai, the meaning is, that it was carried by the monks of Sinai to their monastery, that they might devoutly enrich their dwelling with such a treasure. It is well known that the name of an angelical habit was often used for a monastic habit, and that monks, on account of their heavenly purity and functions, were anciently called *angels*." This ill accords with the language of the Church's collect for November 25, which speaks of the Saint's body as having been "*marvellously* placed by God on Mount Sinai by the hands of the holy angels." By parity of reasoning, what account would Falconius, or Butler after him, have given of the transmigrations of the Holy House of Loreto?

Nero "a lion,"* or as the martyr S. Ignatius named the fierce soldiers that guarded him, "ten leopards." And yet, where points of tradition do not touch the faith or instincts of the Church, and where, consequently, we may either accept simply, or explain away, it seems more loyal, and is often more pleasing, to take things as we find them. Why should not S. George have slain some huge destructive serpent in these eastern regions? The *boa constrictor* and the *python* may not have been classified by these names among the naturalists of the early centuries. But they had an awkward habit of asserting their individuality, then as now, by cracking the ribs of travellers and inhabitants.

If we are reduced to the alternative of having a dragon pure and simple, or else a mere emblem of evil, any cayman or crocodile that may have haunted a Cappadocian river will do duty for him, as though the scene had been an alluvial bank of the Mississippi or the Essequibo.

Alligator, allegory, whichever the dragon may be, at least nothing can deprive us of S. George, nor of the beauty of his character and example, nor of the power of his intercession.

COLLECT.

O God, Who dost rejoice us by the merits and intercession of blessed George the martyr: mercifully grant, that we, who implore Thy blessings though him, may obtain them by the gift of Thy grace. Though our Lord.

* 2 Tim. iv. 7.

SS. ZITA AND VERDIANA, VV.,*

DOMESTIC SERVANTS.

APRIL 27.

A.D. 1279 AND 1222.

MOST of us are apt to indulge the fancy, that if only we found ourselves in another position in life, we should serve God better, and be more in the way of saving our souls. "Give me a different set of surroundings," we say—"remove from me that person or persons who hinder me, whether by influence or repulsion. Let me have more leisure, or more health, or not this particular employment, or another place. See how much better a person I should become. It is only just precisely where I am, that I cannot get on."

First, do you deserve any better place? Have you paved the way to it, by faithfulness to your present graces and opportunities? Would you not carry, into that fancied scene, the same character you are so ill-satisfied with in the scene around you?

Even the heathen poet could tell us so much:

> Who, from his country exil'd, *Self* can flee?
> Seas you may cross:—but to remotest climes
> The same weak, faulty Self is wafted still.

But this is the uncomfortable side of a truth, that has also its brighter. That better side is a conviction that, in

* S. Verdiana preceded S. Zita to the eternal world by half a century; but the day of her celebration is not given in Röhrbacher, from whom the following account is taken. S. Zita's name is therefore placed first.

general, we could hardly be more favourably placed than we are. Has not the All-wise and All-loving Father put us here? If, indeed, our position has been self-chosen, from some imperfect motive — selfwill, ambition, disordinate affection—why, then, we have to repent, and make the best of it. We have placed ourselves at a disadvantage; if we cannot get out of the false position, we must pray that our self-chosen act may be over-ruled for good. But, supposing we have been born in the state of life where we are, or have drifted into it by "circumstances over which we have [really] had no control"—or have been led thither by clear indications and over-rulings of Providence—then, let us rejoice, and take courage. There are graces awaiting us on that path, abundantly sufficient for our need. "My God shall supply all your want, according to His riches, in glory, in Christ Jesus."*

And this is shown, again and again, in the lives of the Saints. It is not their position, but their interior graces, that formed them. We have saintly soldiers, sailors, doctors, goldsmiths, labourers in the fields.† Kings and queens, and nobles, and ladies, enough at least to represent these classes. Lawyers? Well; there have been Saints who in their earlier days had practised the law. In a word, every lawful calling has had its aspirants to sanctity. They have offered up their daily labours, trials, crosses; and so turned them all to gold. They have kept themselves recollected, and their hearts prayerful, amid their business, or busy-ness. We are now to see how this was the case with two saintly servant-maids.

St. Paul, speaking of various avocations and employments, makes a remarkable statement.

He first lays down the principle, that conditions of life are providentially appointed; so that, in most cases, people are better off, for the interests of their eternity, by remaining where they are, and sanctifying themselves there. "Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was

* Phil. iv. 19, according to the Greek.

† For soldiers, S. Maurice and his companions, SS. Sebastian, George, and many others. For sailors, S. Brendan, who is said to have discovered America. SS. Cosmas, Damian, Pantaleon, stand for those skilled in medicine; while S. Eligius, or Eloi, is the worker in precious metals, and S. Isidore the worker in the earth.

called."* That is, supposing it to be his true and ultimate vocation.

But there is one apparent exception: what is to be said of the *slave?* A slave is at the will of his master; the master may be wicked, and command the slave to do evil: or he may be hard and exacting, so as to hinder the slave from good. Surely, if a slave has a chance of being freed, he ought to take it? "No," answers the Apostle: "wast thou called, being a bondman? care not for it; but even† if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." Use thy condition of slavery, with its crosses, rather than gain thy freedom with what seem to be its larger opportunities: for "it is good for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth."‡

And so, when slavery had passed away, and domestic service came in its place, the argument became stronger, because the servitude was more lenient, the yoke proportionably light, and the danger to Faith, in many cases, none at all. The same blessedness, in a state of subjection:— not indeed always pleasant at the time, but rich in merit for eternity. For it inherits a large share of the Beatitude: "Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of Heaven."§ Poor indeed, are they, impoverished of their very liberty, who live at the beck of others. They have resigned even dominion over themselves, in the common matters of life. Thrice blessed those chosen souls, who come forward with a vow on their lips to do this. Truly blessed, in a secondary degree, they who acquiesce in the providential necessity of doing it. In either case, there are touches, more or less distinctly marked, of the Features of Him who "was poor, and in toils, from His youth up."‖

A poor couple who lived, about the middle of the

* 1 Cor. vii. 20. There would almost seem to be a play of words here. The Apostle uses the term "to be called" for the vocation to Christianity; whereas the "calling" in which he is to remain, when he has been called to the faith, is his ordinary employment, craft, or profession.

† 1 Cor. vii. 21. The force of the passage is lost by omitting the "*even*" if, as S. Paul wrote it.

‡ Lam. iii. 27.

§ St. Luke vi. 20.

‖ Psalm lxxxvii. 16.

twelfth century, at Castel Fiorentino near Florence, had a little girl, whom they named Verdiana. Like so many others who afterwards attained to eminent sanctity, she seemed marked, from the first, with the image and superscription of the Great King. Verdiana never consorted with children of her own age; not from moroseness, but because, even then, she was in better company. If you wanted to find her, you had to go, either to the church, or to some lonely spot, where she spent her time on her knees.

Would not such be the choice of any, who really apprehended what it is to speak to God? That is good company indeed. "*Vacate*," says the Psalm*—keep yourselves free and disengaged†—"*et videte quoniam ego sum Deus.*" But we do not allow our souls to see Him. We choke them up with a mass of frivolous impertinent thoughts and trifles. We stuff them with new furniture, with choice objects of taste and *virtù*, with pamphlets, newspapers, light literature and gossiping correspondence, till every avenue is blocked, and the thought of God, the sweet perception of His presence, finds no room to enter.

Before she was twelve, Verdiana adopted the habit of wearing an iron chain, together with a rough hair-cloth; and she experienced, of course, how wonderfully mortification enlivens the spirit of prayer. She became so watchful over herself, that no one could remark in her so much as a word, or the minutest indication or gesture, unworthy of a Saint. At that tender age, a relation of better circumstances than her parents, took her into his house, to be a companion to his wife, and, like young Joseph in Egypt, "ruler of all his possession." Soon afterwards, a great famine came, to scourge that part of the country. Her master had stored up a quantity of beans and vegetables, to dispose of them; and for these, unknown to Verdiana, he had already accepted a price. Meanwhile, the suffering poor surrounded the house; and her compassionate heart urged her to distribute all, to supply their needs, to the very

* Psalm xlv. 11.

† The *ferial* days of the week are so called, to remind the clergy, who then find longer offices in their Breviaries, that, whatever their amount of employment, their first duty is to be at leisure for the direct service of God.

last bean. In comes her master, accompanied by the purchaser, and finds them all gone. He broke out into a fury, alarmed his household, roused the neighbourhood. Verdiana, who would certainly have been greatly in fault, except for the stress of circumstances,* spent the night in prayer. Was not He, to whom she had given them in the persons of His poor—was He not possessor and distributor of all things? So, in the morning, the chest that had held the beans was full, as before. She called her master, and said to him: "No longer complain; behold, Jesus Christ has given you back the beans which had been given to Him." It is easy to imagine with what veneration her master regarded her, ever afterwards.

The fame of this miracle was noised abroad, and Verdiana's humility became alarmed. To the grief of the whole neighbourhood, she was now bent on contriving some way to leave her native country, for a spot where she could remain obscure and unknown. Soon, Providence seemed to favour her design. A number of devout ladies were organizing a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James at Compostella, and Verdiana was associated with them. The people of Castel Fiorentino besought her, for the love of God, to return to them as soon as possible. This she promised to do; then, having confessed and communicated, set out on her pious journey.

Some of the chief inhabitants of her native place went with the pilgrims, part of the way; on their return, they testified that, while Verdiana journeyed on, she had relaxed nothing of her usual vigils, prayers, and fasts. She rose early, visited the sick in the hospitals, consoling them by her gentle, loving words, and by the humble services which she undertook for their relief. During the whole pilgrimage, she made herself the servant of all the rest; assiduous, indefatigable, full of charity; washing their feet, after the example of our "Lord and Master."†

To reach Compostella, in those days, was no easy pilgrimage: it was much more like an apostolic journey.

* In a time of extreme distress, the claims of private property so far cease, as may be necessary to sustain the life and relieve the pressing wants of those who have not otherwise sufficient.

† S. John xiii. 14.

If there were no "perils of waters" in that long over-land route, there were "perils of robbers," besides the manifold hardships of travel in the thirteenth century. Any one who will take the map of Europe, may see that the pious company had to accomplish more than nine hundred miles, to reach the shrine in which reposes the sacred body of "James the son of Zebedee." If they crossed the gulf of Lyons to Barcelona, there were Barbary corsairs hovering about, to swoop down upon them in their swift galleys; and then Verdiana, instead of being the honoured servant at Castel Fiorentino, might have become the overtasked slave of some Mussulman tyrant. But no; rather than that, a martyr for the faith on the coast of Africa. If, again, the pilgrims went all the way by land, they had to brave the perils of those Alpine passes, which even our modern travel has not made too secure. They left the sunny plains, with their mulberry plantations and citron groves, to scale the precipice, to encounter snow-wreath and avalanche, mist and thunder-cloud, till the Alps handed them on to the Pyrenees, and they, in turn, to that wild track that runs due west, and looks out on the wilder Atlantic, between the Cantabrian mountains and the north coast of Spain. It was, in truth, a penitential journey.

But it is over, and the pilgrims have returned. Verdiana was received again with the utmost joy. Every one felt they had recovered a treasure they had been in danger of losing; and her wish for solitude and obscurity was frustrated for the time.

When they all implored her never to leave them again, Verdiana made one request; that they should build her a cell, in which she could live in seclusion. Thus she would at once fulfil their wishes, and provide for her own attraction to a solitary life. She would pray, and love her Lord, for them all; and be among them as the heart is in the body, ever active, yet unseen.

While the humble walls of the little cell were rising, close to the church of S. Antony, outside the walls of Castel Fiorentino, she undertook a second pilgrimage. This was to the tomb of the Apostles, ever the special point of attraction to the Church's children. Verdiana had only intended to pass Lent in the Eternal City. But her spiritual endow-

ments became known to some of the devout in Rome, whether she would or no; and they detained her amongst them, by a kind of gentle force. She remained there for three whole years, and the cell by S. Antony's, if built in her absence, stood tenantless.

At length, Verdiana escaped in secret from those whom we might also call her clients in Rome, and returned to her native place, where she was received a second time with public rejoicings. Those were days, when people knew how to value the blessing of a Saint residing amongst them. If "the Lord blessed Obed-edom the Gethite,"* and all that he had, because the Ark had been deposited in his house, how much more is a neighbourhood blest and hallowed, when a living tabernacle of the Holy Ghost exists and prays amid the daily goings on and constant imperfections of the bulk of its population!

When her narrow cell was finished, this holy virgin came to the parish church in the town, made her confession, and received Holy Communion, with a vow of obedience, under God, to the parish priest; he, in turn, blessed the habit and veil of her new religious life. She then proceeded straight to her cell, with a cross in her hands, and accompanied by all the clergy and people, whom she besought to pray for her. They, on their part, urgently entreated her intercessions. When she had entered, the door was built up; only a small aperture was left open, towards the church. It was, in truth, a living tomb.

And now that Verdiana is no longer servant or pilgrim, but a walled-up recluse, it might seem that no more remained to be recorded of her. On the contrary, the truly miraculous event of her life was to begin. A wonderful thing, indeed; so unheard of, that we have to remind ourselves, in reading it, that a Saint is out of proportion with the ordinary just. So, too, of a Saint's trials and afflictions. In the measure in which God's eminent servants are devoted to Him, absorbed in the contemplation of Him, and desirous to partake, more intimately, of the Divine nature,† their sufferings are also increased. They walk by faith, indeed and in truth, and their spiritual sight of God bears them up through mortifications under which feebler natures would

* 2 Kings vi. 2. † 2 S. Peter i. 4.

sink. The more they suffer, the more do they thirst for sufferings which will render them yet more like to their Beloved.

Verdiana redoubled, in her seclusion, the mortifications she had been used to practise; sleeping on the bare ground, and, in winter, on a board, with a log of wood for a pillow. But all this did not suffice.

Her cell adjoined the church, which was dedicated under the invocation of the great Saint Antony of Egypt. The small window enabled her to hear Mass, and also the preaching; for she had not meant to inflict on herself "a famine of hearing the word of the Lord."* One day, she heard a preacher declare to the people what sufferings Antony, the holy patron of that church, had endured in the desert, from the assaults of demons under the form of wild beasts. Verdiana felt inspired to pray that something of a like martyrdom might be granted to herself. During two years she prayed for it; at length it was sent.

A couple of large loathsome serpents glided one day through the window into her cell. These were sent to be her companions during thirty years. They ate her scanty food out of her porringer, and beat her, in their anger, with their slimy coils, when the vessel was empty.† At first, Verdiana was naturally afraid of these monstrous companions of her cell; but the sign of the Cross delivered her from all fear, and she accepted their grim society as the answer to her prayer. The Bishop of Florence, hearing of the sanctity of this holy recluse, came to visit her; and remained for several days, conversing with her upon heavenly things. When he came to know about these serpents, he advised their being killed; but Verdiana intreated him, in the name of God, to leave her still in possession of her hourly exercise of patience. After thirty years, the inhabitants of the place destroyed one of them, to her great regret, and put the other to flight. Meanwhile, the dumb tormentors had ministered to her in crushing more completely "the Serpent's head." We shall never know, till the last Day, what graces for herself and others

* Amos viii. 2.

† She was sometimes so severely beaten, as to be unable to rise from the floor of her cell for days together.

have been gained, how many sinners converted, how many just souls led on to perseverance, through the instrumentality of those serpents in Verdiana's cell. Oh, that we could use, in the same spirit, such subtle penetrating afflictions and trials, as glide in upon us through the key-hole, whether we will or no!

The humble recluse passed to her reward in the year 1222. Of the many miracles wrought by Almighty God in her honour, some had been witnessed by the author of the biography that has come down to us.

Such is an example of one who loved and served God upon two very diverse paths of life. Verdiana was servant first, and then a solitary during a generation of the world's history. But S. Zita, whom the Church has raised to the altar from the same condition of life, was engaged in domestic service throughout her mortal course.

Zita was born at Montsegradi, a village near Lucca, in the beginning of the thirteenth century; and therefore when Verdiana was about fifty, and had been a recluse many years.

Her very name seemed to betoken something outwardly commonplace and obscure: there was no S. Zita, that we know of, and the name means simply, "Girl." This girl, however, was to live a life that has raised her, for eternity, nearer to the Great King than many girls, women, and ladies, whose names and titles have rung throughout the world. And that, simply because she appropriated to herself the heroism, the martyrdom, of doing daily and common things in a very uncommon way. Many a philosopher, who has wasted his life over his alembic, vainly searching for the secret of transmuting baser metals into gold, has missed the wealth that Zita found. With her, everything was golden, the very gold of the sanctuary; for all was begun in God, continued and ended in Him, offered to Him, embraced and suffered and loved for His sake. How blind we are, if we entirely miss this purpose, day after day! How weak, how wasteful of opportunities, unless we lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with our feet!*

* Hebrews xii. 13.

Zita had the inestimable advantage of a truly pious mother, who guided her earliest thoughts on such "straight steps" to God. Besides, an uncle and aunt had both died in the odour of sanctity. They "gathered" spiritual riches, but Zita "surpassed them all."* She "had no sooner attained the use of reason, and was capable of knowing and loving God, than her heart was no longer able to relish any other object, and she seemed never to lose sight of Him in her actions. Her mother reduced all her instructions to two short heads, and never had occasion to use any further remonstance to enforce her lessons, than to say: 'This is most pleasing to God; this is the Divine Will;' —or, 'That would displease God.' The sweetness and modesty of the young child charmed every one who saw her. She spoke little, and was most assiduous at her work; but her business never seemed to interrupt her prayers."

From such a childhood, Zita passed, at twelve years of age, into domestic service. Had she met with nothing but kindness, her reward would now be less in heaven: but she had need to comfort herself, for several years, with the Apostle's words, that are at once admonition and encouragement:

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thanksworthy, if for conscience towards God, a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. . . For what glory is it, if, committing sin and being buffeted for it, you endure? But if, doing well, you suffer patiently, this is thanksworthy before God."†

She was careful to supernaturalize her daily tasks, her thankless service, by ever cherishing the thought of her heavenly Lord, and offering each act to *His* service, before the glory of whose Presence, the treatment she received from her earthly master and mistress became a "momentary and light tribulation."‡ Thus she carried out S. Paul's injunction, so completely in harmony with that of his brother Apostle:

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, . . in the simplicity of your heart, as to

* Prov. xxxi. 29. † 1 S. Peter ii. 18—20.
‡ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

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Christ: not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with a good will serving, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free."*

While so many repine at being subject to the will of others, Zita accepted it as a wholesome penance, and rejoiced in it as a condition of safety. She had real need to look on her position thus supernaturally; for the family in which she lived were all against her. "Her modesty was called by her fellow-servants simplicity, and want of spirit and sense; and her diligence was judged to have no other spring than affectation and secret pride. Her mistress was a long time extremely prepossessed against her, and her passionate master could not bear her in his sight without transports of rage. It is not to be conceived how much the Saint had to suffer in this situation. So unjustly despised, overburdened, reviled, *and often beaten*, she never repined, nor lost her patience; but always preserved the same sweetness in her countenance, and the same meekness and charity in her heart and words; and abated nothing of her application to her duties."

Now, here is indeed a servant after the Apostle's model.

If these lines should fall under the eye of some domestic victim of the harshness and selfishness of some tyrant of a mistress, let them read, as if the narrative were printed in letters of gold. *Sursum corda!* up with your heart, and with your eyes, to Him that dwelleth in the heavens. He looks down upon you at this moment with looks of compassion, of sympathy, of encouragement and promise. But take care you secure your own happiness, and do not let it slip. Resolve to begin now, if never before, to be a servant preparing for a throne in Heaven. That throne you are to gain, first, by prayer and Sacraments, without which we are all weak indeed:—then, in the strength of that grace, by the daily toil of being housemaid, kitchen-maid, maid of all work, slave of every one, choosing to be "an abject"† in the house of your God.

Not by these drudgeries in themselves; for one may

* Ephes. vi. 5—8. † Psalm lxxxiii. 11.

spend a life-time in them, and go, after all, to the chains and bondage of hell: but by these things, lifted, ennobled, stored with merit, as done for our Father who seeth in secret. A moment or two of thought, a loving act of faith, as we rest to get breath, and cool our heated brows—a thought of Him, a prayer to Him, who swept the floor at Nazareth, and gathered up the shavings from S. Joseph's carpentering. This, and a Hail Mary to her who prepared the daily meal for Jesus and His foster-father in that cottage, and then sat down to her spinning—such are precious memories indeed. What strength, what comfort, is in them! If we do not forget such motives in our hard, grinding employments, neither will Jesus, in portioning out His unspeakable, His unimaginable rewards.

Zita was to gain merit, after a time, by humility amid honours, as she had gained it by humility under trial. "A virtue so constant and so admirable at length overcame jealousy, antipathy, prepossession and malice. Her master and mistress discovered the treasure which their family possessed in the fidelity and example of the humble Saint, and the other servants gave due praise to her virtue. Zita feared this prosperity more than adversity, and trembled, lest it should be a snare to her soul. But sincere humility preserved her from its dangers; and her behaviour, amidst the caresses and respect shown her, continued the same as when she was ill-treated and held in derision: she was no less affable, meek, and modest; no less devout, nor less diligent or ready to serve every one. She used often to say to others, that devotion is false, if slothful."

Other details of this saintly servant's life are so practical, and many of them so imitable, that we will continue the sober matter-of-fact account of them from the same writer.

"She kept fast the whole year, and often on bread and water; and took her rest on the bare floor, or on a board. Whenever business allowed her a little leisure, she spent it in holy prayer and contemplation, in a little retired room in the garret; and, at her work, repeated frequently ardent ejaculations of divine love, with which her soul appeared always inflamed. She respected her fellow-servants as her superiors. If she was sent on commissions a mile or two in the greatest storms, she set out without delay, executed them

punctually, and returned often almost drowned, without showing any sign of reluctance or murmuring."

Zita, like all the Saints, practised great charity in speech and judgment: that peculiarly Christian grace, without which all others go for little; yet a grace so difficult, at times, that people would almost buy themselves off from it, by redoubling their practice of the rest. If she heard others spoken ill of, she zealously took upon her their defence, and excused their faults. Her active charities, both for the temporal and spiritual necessities of her neighbour, kept pace with the rest, and were often rewarded by miraculous power to assist them. One day, a pilgrim, heated and athirst from travel, came to the door, and asked an alms. Distressed at having nothing to give, Zita bade him wait, and hastened to fill a glass with water, which she brought, making over it the sign of the Cross. He drank it eagerly: the water had been changed into delicious wine.

"She never kept anything for herself, but the poor garments which she wore: everything else she gave to the poor. Her master, seeing his goods multiply, as it were, in her hands, gave her ample leave to bestow liberal alms on the poor; which she made use of with discretion, but was scrupulous to do nothing without his express authority."

There is "a blank page between the Old and the New Testament"—the position once assigned by a critic to a Jew who, being converted, became an indifferent Christian. But, in the sacred volume, it is only a blank page left by the printers; for there are many exact parallels between the Saints of the Old and of the New. The servants of God have ever "walked by faith,"* whether under the tradition of the patriarchs, or the Mosaic dispensation, or the Gospel. Amid great, though various trials, they have all "endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible."† Thus, the humiliations of S. Zita, and her high repute afterwards, remind us irresistibly of Joseph in Egypt, of Daniel in Babylon.

Joseph was "sold for a slave: they humbled his feet in fetters; the iron pierced his soul."‡ But after this probation, Pharao said to him: "Thou shalt be over my house, and at the commandment of thy mouth, all the people shall obey: only in the kingly throne will I be above thee."

* 2 Cor. v. 7. † Heb. xi. 27. ‡ Ps. civ. 17, 18.

"I am Pharao; without thy commandment no man shall move hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."* Daniel, a prince by birth, was captive in the hands of Babylonish idolaters. But "the King advanced Daniel to a high station, and gave him many and great gifts; and he made him governor over all the provinces of Babylon, and chief of the magistrates over all the wise men of Babylon."† For "God in His holy place . . bringeth out them that were bound in strength."‡ "Raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill: that He may place him with princes, with the princes of His people."§

Honoured more and more, as her life advanced, and therefore treated less and less as a servant, Zita never lost her spirit of lowliness and selfdenying labour. As the end approached, she detached herself still more from the things of earth, to be occupied with less interruption about the things of heaven. At length, she "entered into the grave in abundance, as a heap of wheat is brought in its season;"‖ dying on the twenty-seventh of April, 1272, without a sign of pain, her eyes raised to heaven, her hands clasped, as in ecstasy of prayer.

A brilliant star, visible to all, appeared over the town of Lucca; undimmed even by the brightness of the sun. Children, to whom her death had not been told, cried to one another, in the squares and streets: "Come, let us run to the church of Saint Frigidian; Zita the Saint is dead!" When her obsequies were performed, an immense multitude, of every class and condition, filled the church, the cloister, and all adjacent parts of the building; each striving to touch the body of the Saint. Times were changed, since her employers so greatly disliked her, and her fellow-servants scoffed at her.

For many days, the priests were unable to celebrate the funeral rites, or proceed to the grave. Day and night, the multitude crowded round the blessed body, each one desirous to have some small relic of her garments. These were renewed again and again, and were still being constantly cut into shreds. To restrain the crowd, and to

* Gen. xli. 40, 44. † Dan. ii. 48. ‡ Ps. lxvii. 6, 7.
§ *Ibid.* cxii. 7, 8. ‖ Job v. 26.

preserve her body from injury amid this tumultuous zeal, it was removed from time to time, and placed, now within the choir, now in the cloister, the chapter-house, the refectory, the guest-room—anywhere, to be out of the way, if possible. But it could not be. That *vox populi*, which sometimes, at least, is *vox Dei*, proclaimed her a Saint, and insisted on appropriating the relics.

Her body was placed in one wooden case after another; but the cases were broken, and the same thing went on. To look at the face of Saint Zita, to get a relic of Saint Zita, was the emotion and enthusiasm of the time. Numerous miracles took place.* The blind, the deaf, the lame and dumb, the sick of various maladies, experienced the "power and principality"† of the servant maid.

When, at length, the prior of the monastery enclosed the holy body in a stone coffin, a miraculous fluid, as in the case of other Saints,‡ continued to flow from it, and to work healing. The cures were witnessed by members of the Sacred College, by prelates, princes, by every sort and condition of person. They came from far and near, to honour Zita—Zita, who having followed the example of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, having made her place of domestic service a Nazareth, had followed them now to Heaven.

So it has been always, and shall be still. "If any one minister to Me, let him follow Me: and where I am, there also shall My minister [or servant] be. If any one minister to Me, him will My Father honour."§

COLLECT.

Hear us, O God of our salvation: that as we rejoice in the festivals of Thy virgins, Blessed Zita and Verdiana, so we may be instructed by [their] heartfelt and tender devotion. Through our Lord.

* One hundred and fifty, then or afterwards, were examined and juridically proved.

† Psalm cxxxviii. 16.

‡ See the account of S. Walburge, in *Afternoons with the Saints*.

§ S. John xii. 26.

SAINT PAUL OF THE CROSS,

FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION.

APRIL 28.

A.D. 1775.

"O ALL ye, who pass by the way: Attend and see, if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow."

"I have spread forth My hands all the day to an unbelieving people, who walk in a way that is not good."

"Who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth, crucified among you?"

"We preach Christ crucified . . Christ, the power of God."

"They shall look upon Me, whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for an only son."*

These great truths determined the vocation, they interpreted the long apostolic life, of a young Italian boy, whose pious parents lived at Ovada, a town belonging to the republic of Genoa.

Others, indeed, beside young Paul Danei, had heard, time after time, all about the Passion of the Word Incarnate. Others, beside him, had often seen the crucifix, and perceived with their intellect its mute, powerful appeal. But even so had the mixed multitude on Calvary: nay, they had gazed, not on the crucifix, but on the Crucified. How much were they the better for it? How many of them carried away a saving remembrance of what they had seen?

* Lam. i. 12; Isaias xlv. 2; Gal. iii. 1; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; Zach. xii. 10.

"All the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned, striking their breasts."* Natural compassion, the horror of contemplating the agonized death of One whom Pilate had pronounced innocent—this was enough to make them smite their breasts with a first emotion, that might have led them on to be saved. But they "returned"—to what? To their homes and common employments; to their amusements, and their sins? How many of all that multitude turned once more, to turn to the Lord?

So, in every age, multitudes turn away from that sight, more or less unconcerned, therefore unconverted. Neither crucifix, nor the Crucified, can found in their hearts a personal appeal. The imagination may be arrested, but it moves them to no purpose of imitation. The crucifixion is to them a fact in history, perhaps an object of art, on which they descant, as on a landscape or a picture of "still life." Good Friday is an annual observance, alien from the thoughts and motives of the other three hundred and sixty-four days of the year. Our Lord's continual appeal—His unceasing cry from His Cross:

O all you, who pass by the way: Attend, and see!

this is scarcely heard, is not heeded at all.

The Cross, however, found, from the first, a resting-place in the heart of Paul Danei, and sank deep into it. It occupied his every thought: it moulded his life. He entered thus early into the inheritance of the Saints—a loving and fruitful contemplation of the Passion of Jesus. So S. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, in a fervour of loving zeal, took the crucifix in her hand, and went swiftly through the cloisters of her convent, calling out to her sisters: *O, che l'Amore non è amato!* "Oh, that this Divine Love should remain unloved!" And even such a zeal animated him, who for half a century was to bear the name of Paul of the Cross. "May the Passion of Jesus Christ be ever in our hearts!"†

* S. Luke xxiii. 48.

† *Jesu Christi Passio sit semper in cordibus nostris.* The first words are worked upon the heart-shaped badge which every Passionist religious wears on the breast of his black habit. His fourth vow is, constantly to promote devotion to our Lord's Passion.

This was to be his device, his watchword, the text of his fervent preaching, his soul's daily support, the fire to melt all hearts around him. The Carmelite nun was enclosed within the grate; she could only communicate that sacred fire to the few who shared her enclosure, and to others, through her ardent prayers. But S. Paul, like his great namesake the Apostle of the Gentiles, was to go forth, and kindle the flame in crowds and multitudes, from that deep source of love in his own heart, "as a fire, shut up in his bones."* *Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer, et servus tuus dilexit illud.*†

From his tenderest years, the crucifix was Paul's book of meditation, and the model he proposed to himself. But not in an idle speculative way; it nerved him to every effort to become fit to preach it, as well as to carry it, when the time should come. Study was among his crosses, and patiently endured. It was the means to the end—the end being, to engrave the Passion in the hearts of others. Even at ten years old, "his advancement in study was beyond all that could be hoped for, at his age, and in that school. He distinguished himself among all his companions, and deserved a most honourable report from his master. He applied himself to those human studies, with a spirit calm and free from all disquietude. Hence he gained that felicitous method of solid reasoning, that appropriate and choice expression, that unaffected winning eloquence, which afterwards contributed so greatly to the success of his missions.

"The progress he made in the science of the Saints was not less remarkable. Though far from his paternal roof, he did not forget the advice and exhortations of his good parents, and made constant advance in the practice of piety, which he had already so happily begun. Early in the morning, he was at his prayers; he assisted every day at Mass, frequently approached the Sacraments; and what time he had, free from his school duties, instead of spending it in useless amusements, as boys are wont to do, he gave to the reading of good books, and visiting the churches,

* Jer. xx. 9.
† Psalm cxviii. 140.

where he often spent a long time before the Blessed Sacrament, to which he already had an ardent devotion."*

Such a life, lived by a schoolboy not yet fifteen, is rendered more striking by contrast with another. Perhaps this is the place to notice the remarkable circumstance, that the thrice-unhappy Voltaire† was born within seven weeks after the birth of the Saint. Paul Danei came into the world on the 3rd of January, and Francis Arouet on the 20th of February, both in 1694.

"It seemed as if God was pleased, in this instance as in other similar ones, to prepare for the birth of that monster, by bringing into the world a man whom He would fill with His own Spirit, and employ, in his own person and that of his spiritual children, as an instrument to counteract and undo the evil wherewith that unbelieving, false philosopher, by his writings and those of his miserable followers, would strive to infect the world."‡

And now we have before us, could it be pursued in detail, a life so crucified, throughout its long course, that Paul seems, like the prophet Isaias, to walk barefoot, for a sign and a wonder, before the eyes of a self-indulgent, Christ-forgetting world. Seldom, if ever, since the days of S. Peter of Alcantara, could it be so expressly said of any one, in the full force of the term, that he "always bore about in his body the mortification of Jesus."§ And this continued throughout his apostolical career of some fifty years. Let us listen to his biographer.

"Paul became daily more and more severe with his body; though already worn out with fasts and labours, he tortured it with instruments of penance which it horrifies one to name. . In Gaeta is preserved a belt of iron set with points, three or four inches wide, and a discipline of cords with seven thongs, each of which has at the end a ball of lead with six iron points round it, all stained with blood. Both these instruments were taken from him by his

* From his *Life*, translated from the Italian by Father Spencer, now with God, and given to me by my dear friend Father Alphonsus of the Passion, to whom, and to the Congregation of which he is a member, I am under obligations never to be sufficiently repaid.

† Appendix D.

‡ *Life*, pp. 241, 242.

§ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

confessor. In his cell, at the Retreat of Vetralla, may be seen a cross set with one hundred and eighty-sixty points, which he used to wear on his naked breast. In Caparbio, the mistress of the house were he lodged during the Mission found, hidden in his room, while he was preaching, a heart of iron full of sharp points, a ball set with longer points, and several disciplines prepared in a similar way. All these instruments of penance were stained with blood. Besides the disciplines, he had a chain of iron, with which he bruised his innocent body in such a way that, being now grown old, he threw it away where it could not be found, saying: 'Now you have done bruising me, I'll take care you shall bruise no one else.'"

His biographer goes on to show, that even these mortifications were not the only ones by which the holy missioner used to appease the justice of Heaven, for others as for himself. And then he concludes, with great truth:

"Worldly delicacy, on hearing such things, is shocked, disapproves, and condemns: but most unjustly. Paul, like all the Saints, used to meditate on a God who, to display the rigour of His justice, outraged by the sins of men, showed no mercy to His Only-begotten Son. He meditated on that most innocent Son, submitting, by His Father's will, to be scourged from head to foot, and to be hung on a Cross for us. From this it followed, that Paul loved Him most ardently; and since love is unitive, and transforms the lover into the Object beloved, it made suffering most sweet to him. Hence, where the cowardly spirit of worldly delicacy is so shocked and horrified, the noble and elevated spirit of Paul found flowers of delight. 'The animal man,' says the Apostle, 'understandeth not those things which are of the Spirit of God.'"

This constant personal union with the Cross and Passion of our Lord, was certainly the prominent mark of S. Paul's sanctity. By this he is chiefly known and distinguished among the servants of God. It lay at the root, it nourished the entire growth, of those wide-spreading and fruitful efforts for men's souls, that made him an apostolic missioner through nearly half a century of life. But devotion to the Passion was a grace that did not stand alone. His biographer rehearses all those other virtues of the Christian life,

which he carried to a heroic degree. Numerous miracles, besides those special ones brought forward at his beatification and canonization, attested the favour he enjoyed with God. Miracles of grace, too, abounded, in the conversion of sinners seemingly hardened and hopeless; as samples of others uncounted, unknown, that await the revelation of all things at the Great Day.

Even casual words of such a man, and expressions dropping from his pen, must be worth the gathering up. He was like that other preacher, Ecclesiastes, who "sought profitable words, and wrote words most right, and full of truth."* With a great difference, however; and one of eternal consequence. For Paul Danei, like his Divine Master, "began to do and teach;"† his exhortations were always seconded by his example, by his life: which is more than can be said for poor Solomon. Thus his "words . . are as goads, and as nails deeply fastened in;"‡ they stay in a loving memory, and spur an awakened will. A page may be well occupied with some among the number.

The first extract reproduces, almost word for word, a maxim inscribed by S. Ignatius on a foundation-stone of his Spiritual Exercises.

"Happy is the soul that detaches itself from its own pleasures, from its own will, from its own understanding. A sublime lesson is this; and God will teach it to all who place their happiness in the Cross of Jesus Christ."

Here is comfort for the afflicted, if only they are also humbled:

"In troubles, in disappointments, in tribulations, we must humble ourselves, and stoop down our heads; because, when God means to give us one blow, if we lift up our heads, He will give us ten—if we stoop them, though He meant to give us ten, He will only give us one."

Nor would we miss transcribing the three following very precious ones about prayer:

"If we would dispose ourselves for holy prayer, and to preserve the fruit of it, we must keep ourselves in the presence of God; not by a dry and barren effort, but by a calm and loving care to become penetrated, through and through, with the Spirit of God."

* Eccles. xii. 10. † Acts i. 1. ‡ Eccles. xii. 11.

"When we go into a garden, it is to gather fruit, not leaves: so, in the sacred garden of prayer, we are not to gather the leaves of sensible feelings and consolations, but the fruits of an imitation of the virtues of Jesus Christ."

"If any one is prevented by the duties of his state from making a great deal of prayer, let him not be disquieted thereat, but endeavour to fulfil those duties exactly, and with a pure intention, having God in view: and this will be an excellent prayer."

In England, certainly, we should be forward to love and venerate S. Paul of the Cross; for he always loved us, and greatly. He saw, in the light of God, what this Empire might become, what it was capable of doing for the Divine cause on earth, did it but "know, at least in this its day." The vast colonies committed to our hands, our sea-faring successes and naval supremacy, the adventurous spirit we have inherited from Scandinavian and Norman vikings, the combined pluck and endurance that might carry the Cross high on the prows of our ships, and make it more than a traditional symbol on the flags of our armies—the innate love of truth and piety that animates our people, even amid their manifold error—in a word, the spiritual capabilities of our England, her ten talents, that would become such a factor in the heavenly trade* for souls—all this passed before the mind of this great son of the Passion.

"There is no telling," says his *Life*, "how many tears he shed, how many sighs he breathed out to Heaven, how many prayers he put up to God, for the return of England to the Catholic Church. Often he used to say, with great feeling: '*Ah, England, England; let us pray for England!* I could not help doing it, even if I wished; for as soon as I begin to pray, that unhappy kingdom comes before me. It is now fifty years that I have been praying for the conversion of England. I do it every morning in the Holy Mass. What may be God's intentions concerning that kingdom, I know not: perhaps He will yet have mercy on it, and the day will come when He will, by His goodness, bring it to the true faith. Well, let us pray for this blessing, and leave it in God's hands.'

* S. Luke xix. 13.

"One day, when he was ill, the infirmarian came into his room, and found him in an ecstasy; he had to shake him three times, at least, before he came to himself. He then exclaimed: 'Oh, where was I, just now? I was in spirit in England, considering the great martyrs of times past, and praying God for that kingdom.' It pleased God in part to console His servant; it being recorded that one morning, after celebrating Mass, and praying for the conversion of the English, he said with great joy: 'Oh, what have I seen? my religious in England!'

"And he was not mistaken; for one of his children, Father Dominic of the Mother of God, a religious distinguished for learning, virtue, and zeal, who inherited the spirit of his blessed Father, continued for twenty-seven years praying and making others pray, for the conversion of that island; ardently desiring to go there, to labour and die in so holy a cause. He told one of his fellow-religious, who was a student of theology under his direction, that this desire consumed him; and that, in a vision in which the Blessed Virgin had deigned to appear to him, she consoled him with the assurance that his desires would one day be gratified: and so it came to pass. After all those years of prayers and desires, he went to England in the year 1841, under circumstances which seemed almost miraculous. For the space of about eight years, he laboured with immense zeal, reconciled to the Holy Church a number of Protestants, and among them several persons of the first rank for learning and consideration. He founded there three houses; and thus England became one of the Provinces of our Institute. His name became famous in that kingdom among the Catholics, who all looked on him as a man of apostolic character, and a holy religious. In the midst of his labours, in the year 1849, it pleased God to call him to his eternal reward, after having realized in his person what the blessed Founder had seen at least in spirit—his children labouring with success for the return of that nation to the bosom of the Church."*

The Italian author, whose work is here quoted in the translation, omits two circumstances, one of them of

* *Life*, pp. 179, 180.

great interest to all cultivated Englishmen, the other, personal to Father Dominic. To take the second first.

(1) This holy and zealous son of the Passion had a death such as none could wish for, or contemplate with serenity, unless he were living as close to God, and in preparation as habitual, as he was. He died in a railway hotel, on a journey undertaken for business of his Order. Seized by a sudden and fatal attack, he lay dying in his Passionist habit, surrounded by porters, stokers, and passengers. So he passed to his Lord. He had prayed, indeed, in the daily litany:

> From a sudden and unprovided death,
> Deliver us, O Lord!

But, with equal fervour:

> That thou wouldst vouchsafe to strengthen and preserve us in Thy holy service;
> That Thou wouldst raise our minds to heavenly desires;
> We beseech Thee, hear us.

And his Master had heard him in the latter petition, and had granted half of the former. Though Father Dominic's death was sudden, his life forbids us to think of it as unprovided. Had he not "died daily?" Had he not always borne about in his body the mortification of Jesus, and the life also of Jesus, had it not been made manifest in his mortal flesh?* Had he not "in all things exhibited himself as the minister of God . . in stripes, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God?"† Such men are among the wise, who stand with their loins girded, and lamps burning in their hands, and they themselves "like to men who wait for their Lord . . that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him immediately."‡

If such suddenness had no terrors for Father Dominic, it was even an object of desire and prayer to his saintly brother in religion, Father Ignatius Spencer. He, a true son of the Passion, always desired to die, like our Lord on the Cross, unaided in his last moments by hand of man. And he had his wish, to the letter. That heart of love and zeal, having traversed Europe bare-foot, with one cry on his lips, "The conversion of England!" was vouchsafed a

* 2 Cor. iv. 10. † *Ibid.* vi. 4—7. ‡ S. Luke xii. 35, 36.

death as characteristic as his life had been. In the grounds of a friend, to whose house he was walking on a visit of Christian kindliness, he met two children, and his last words on earth to them wound up his long mission. They were to say a Hail Mary daily, for the conversion of England. A few minutes after, he was found dead on the grass.

These two men were of very different antecedents and prospects in former life. One, the child of a peasant-home, dreaming in his distant Italy of the England he had never yet seen, except in the strong desire of his soul. The other, a scion of that England's aristocracy, trained amid the splendour and political eminence of his ancestral home, then immersed in the well-appointed parsonage, with its elegant surroundings, fitted to be those of an Earl's younger son, full in view of the mitre and House of Peers. The latter renounced all the world's full-handed gifts; the former was like S. Peter, who left his poor boat and nets, and therein his all. But such accidental differences were fused in the ardent charity that welded them together under the Cross, and stamped the badge of the Passion on their burning hearts. "Lovely and comely in their life, even in death they were not divided."*

(2) The whole subject has so much interest for us, here in our native land, that we must not pass without notice another expression of S. Paul's biographer, about Father Dominic.

"He reconciled to the Holy Church a number of Protestants, and among them several persons of the first rank for learning and consideration."

It was hardly to be looked for, that one writing so far from the scene of action should perceive the full scope of his own words. But among those whom the saintly Passionist reconciled was he, whose secession, or rather exodus, from Egypt to Canaan, was afterwards described as "a blow under which the English Church yet reels."

At Littlemore, a hamlet within sight of many-towered Oxford, two or three small cottages have been thrown together into a simple habitation for half a dozen studious ascetic men. It is not a monastery, though they live by a kind of monastic rule—for no Superior General owns it, and

* 2 Kings i. 23.

no bishop blesses it. It is not a Port Royal of schismatic recluses, for its inmates—feared, outcast, disliked, by the authorities of their communion, have longed and waited for any declaration to emanate from that source, and to comfort them by pronouncing: "This is the Catholic faith." It is not a Bedlam;* for he who is the soul and centre of the place, round whom those few have grouped themselves—he who taught and trained them, and won their reverential love—is possessor of an intellect clear, keen, far-reaching, ready and serviceable, that ranks him high among England's greatest thinkers: an intellect that guides his pen, and will guide it for forty years to come, in the innermost circle of her greatest writers. There do they study and pray,, in preparation for their future home.

Outwardly, indeed, this event has been the mature result of reading, thought, and prayer, and detachment of the will from all but the Will of God. They have been the Fathers and great theologians of the Church, to which he is born a stranger, but whose thankful adopted child he is now to become—these have moulded him. And they have been powerfully aided in the process by others, who little knew what they did; the favoured of the world of their day, and followers of its ways; representatives of a semi-Christianity, well content with their position and all it has bestowed on them; who have wondered at his yearnings, been irritated by his reasons, declared "his ways very different"† from theirs, and all but "cast him out."‡

Though, in this sense, other men laboured, and Father Dominic entered into their labours, yet doubtless it was the reputation of his sanctity and mortified life that determined *his* to be the special hand that should put in the sickle, and reap what had already ripened for the harvest.

They to whom dates and intervals are neither a superstition, nor yet an idle unmeaning notation of time, may remark that this event of 1845 was just seventy years after the death, in 1775, of him who had so yearned for England's conversion. S. Paul was continuing his work in Heaven: and thus, all the souls that shall have owed their first move-

* An expression used playfully, many years ago, by one of those who were living and praying at Littlemore, in a letter to a friend.

† Wisdom ii. 15. ‡ S. John. ix. 34.

ment towards conversion to the example and the pen of the once-vicar of S. Mary's, hermit of Littlemore, son of S. Philip, Cardinal of S. George in Velabro, will add a beauty and a brightness to the Passionist's eternal crown.

(3) S. Paul of the Cross, like that same S. Philip before him, was stirred, when he thought of England, by memory of the "great martyrs of times past," whose life-blood has been freely poured out to win back their country. Each of these two Saints could read, in the light of faith, a chapter of England's history, that is but now slowly opening to the general English mind. The Founder of the Oratory, in the sixteenth century, used to salute the students of the English College, when he met them in the streets of Rome, with the Church's hymn,

Salvete, flores martyrum ;

as foreseeing how many of those young lives would probably be nipped by the fierce persecution then raging, on their self-devoted return to their native England. And so, the Founder of the Congregation of the Passion, nearly two centuries after him, thought of our blessed and reviled English martyrs, so far as he knew the details of their glorious conflict. He thought of Fisher and More, of Campion, of Garnet, Oldcorne, Arrowsmith—of the cruel butcheries at Tyburn, in York, and so many other places of savage bloodshedding and heroic endurance—of the fearful decline of England into half-faith or no faith—yet of the power of that eloquent blood, to plead for England's recovery.

With those mingled memories, of the atrocities of despots and the heroism of martyrs, no wonder that Paul, who "had never seen blood, except in disciplines,"* but who recognized the beauty, wherever he saw it, of any reflexion of the Passion of his Lord, so frequently cried out for England's conversion. No wonder that in vision and ecstasy, his crucified Lord should deign to reveal to His servant, that the coarse sable habit of his religious was one day to appear in our land, and their sandalled feet to be "beautiful"† on the highways and byeways of a country, too

* Words of Cardinal Newman about his spiritual father S. Philip.
† Is. lii. 7 ; Rom. x. 15.

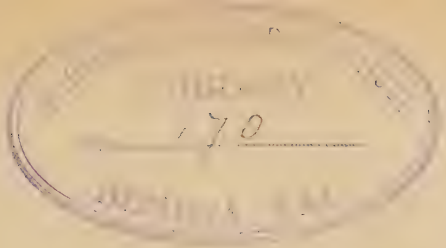
long beguiled by the seductions of wealth, and by that complacent worship of the "Comfortable," which has become the Englishman's predominant idol.

If our nation is indeed to be won back to God, it will be by such arousing words and such arresting example as came from the lips and breathed around the presence of S. John the Baptist. It will be by the "hard ways" and manifest self-crucifixion of missioners and ministers of penance, like the sons of S. Paul of the Cross—whom God multiply in the midst of us.

And if ever our saintly sufferers under the cruel steel of Tudor and of Stuart are raised to the Church's altars, then among the pictures adorning their shrines should a place be found for the sweet and mortified features of Paul Danei, who wrestled in prayer, who fasted and lacerated himself, in the same great cause; for that of Dominic, his spiritual child, who first carried out among us his Father's yearnings; and of Ignatius Spencer, whose consuming zeal, amid ill report and good report, burned that the England he loved so well, might re-assert her title as the "Dowry of Mary," and carry through the world the triumphant Cross of Jesus Crucified.

COLLECT.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst endow S. Paul with singular charity, to preach the mystery of the Cross, and hast willed a new [religious] family to spring up and flourish in Thy Church by his means: grant to us, through his intercession, that ever recalling Thy Passion upon earth, we may merit to gain the fruits of it in Heaven. Who livest.



SS. PUDENTIANA AND PRAXEDES, VV.

MAY 19, AND JULY 21.

A.D. ABOUT 160.

TIMES of persecution bring to the surface a fortitude, which might have been lying dormant in a character for years, beneath a calm and quiet exterior, till it comes out under the iron pressure of man's cruelty. The normal state of such periods of history is endurance for the truth; and the watch-word of its martyrs, confessors, sufferers in whatever degree, sounds in the trumpet-note of the Apostle: "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; do manfully, and be strengthened."* Indeed, the simple alternative, then, is to suffer or to apostatize. As Sir Thomas More said of the oath of Supremacy: "It lies between beheading, and hell;" there is no middle path or neutral ground. "He that is not with Me, is against Me."

S. Ambrose vividly depicts the twofold apprehension that sways the mind of a martyr; of such martyrs, at least, as were not perhaps endowed with the ecstatic joy amid their pains, that belonged to the more privileged ones. A man may still retain his natural fear of suffering, under the horrible forms in which persecution knows how to threaten him. But he has a still greater dread of dishonouring the King of martyrs, of failing under his trial, and losing his soul. And this second fear, overmastering the first, teaches him to endure. Thus speaks S. Ambrose, commenting on the words of the Psalm: "Princes have persecuted me without cause: and my heart hath been in awe of Thy word."†

"Represent to yourselves the martyr, surrounded by perils. On the one side, the growling of savage beasts

* 1 Cor. xvi. 13. † Psalm cxviii. 161.

strikes terror into the soul; on the other side, clash the heated plates of metal,* and the roaring fiery furnace is all a-flame. Here, heavy chains rattle as they are dragged along; there, the blood-stained executioner stands ready. Whithersoever he turns his eyes, nought but instruments of torture meet his sight. Then his thoughts revert to the Divine command; to those quenchless fires that shall never cease to devour the unfaithful; to the pain of those punishments, ever-renewed. His heart is agitated with dread, lest, under the present stress, he surrender himself to eternal perdition. His mind is perturbed, while he beholds, as in actual vision, that dreadful sword of the Judgment to come. Do not the two emotions combine with equal power to move, amid all his trust, this constant man—confident hope of the eternal good he desires, and fear, while he ponders the word divine?"†

What a picture is this, of a state of life and society! It recals to us the condition in which the Apostle lived: "Our flesh had no rest, but we suffered all tribulation: combats without, fears within."‡ It was like perpetually fighting with beasts at Ephesus. We, in our easy days, called upon to endure next to nothing for our faith, find it hard to imagine what it would really be, to live for a week or two under the stress of such perpetual dread. Dread, at once of suffering, and of giving way under it. What grace was needed, and how abundantly was it bestowed, to make the little flock of Christians withstand the savage efforts of the persecutor, and to triumph! Not brave soldiers only, nor hardy slaves and gladiators, nor stalwart men of middle life, inured to pain and blood, but "young men and maidens, the old with the younger,"§ these, by nature the weakest and most unlikely, confronted the fierce determination of the persecutor with a meek resolution that overbore and outwearied his own. It was the strength, not of nature, but of grace; therefore of God.

The prophetic hymn of Isaias seems to contemplate

* Applied to the martyrs' sides and limbs, as a variety to the cruel iron claws, used to rake and tear them. *Nec severus uncus abest*, (says Horace), *liquidumque plumbum.*

† S. Ambros. in Psalm cxviii. Serm. 21.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 5.

§ Psalm cxliii. 12.

these sufferers, their tenderness and fortitude, their natural shrinking, their superhuman might. The words were inspired nearly eight centuries before the first Christian maid, wife, widow or child yielded up life amid torments. Thus the prophet sang, in terms that might be an antiphon to the *Vexilla Regis prodeunt* of the Church's own triumphal hymn:

> Knowest thou not, or hast thou not heard?
> The Lord is the everlasting God,
> Who hath created the ends of the earth:
> * * * * *
> It is He that giveth strength to the weary,
> And increaseth force and might to them that are not.
> Youths shall faint and labour,
> And young men shall fall by infirmity:
> But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength;
> They shall take wings as eagles;
> They shall run, and not be weary,
> They shall walk, and not faint.*

Such thoughts, it might be said, would chime better with the feast of some *martyr* among the holy virgins of the Church's calender—S. Agatha, S. Potamiana, S. Dorothea. The names at the head of these pages are those of virgins whose festivals are celebrated in white. The sacristan then lays out no crimson chasuble; for their holy deaths were peaceful and bloodless. And yet—is it indeed the case, that SS. Pudentiana and Praxedes had nothing to do with martyrdom? Let us survey their lives, and see.

First, S. Bernard declares, that a long life of confessorship may have in it such accumulated suffering, endured in the long run with so great patience, as to exceed the pains of martyrdom itself. The martyr goes to God, let us suppose, by a sword-stroke; or by a plunge into the Tiber. He is set up as a mark, and arrow after arrow quivers in his flesh, as with S. Sebastian, and our own martyred king, S. Edmund. Sharp and terrible, while it lasts: but after a time it lets out the blessed life, and suffering is over, while glory and Heaven begin. Suppose even a martyrdom protracted, like that of S. Laurence on the heated bars of his gridiron: here you have a Saint who "was allowed to live long; nay, not allowed to live long, but compelled to die

* Isaias xl. 28--31.

slowly."* Yet, by comparison, it is soon done. Meanwhile, he laughs in the face of his persecutor; and S. Leo interprets his triumphant laughter. "Nought thou gainest, nought dost thou profit, O savage cruelty! The material on which thy torments can act, that mortal substance, is withdrawn from thy hands: Laurence passes away to heaven, and thou art left there, with thy [ineffectual] fires."†

Whereas the confessor, he or she who offers the daily, unbloody oblation of self, on the altar of a great charity, and to the measure of a real sacrifice, is a life-long, willing "witness" to the power of Grace—a kind of martyr without the special aureole. Such patient sufferers, such enduring victims, are witnessing daily for their Lord, and daily taking up their crosses after Him. So that the lives of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedes might have a good deal of martyrdom in them, after all.

Then, again, they were tender-hearted maidens, compassionate even in the measure of their sanctity: and they suffered acutely in the dreadful state of things around them. The grace of Him who is love, opens the heart, keeps it tender, teaches it to sympathize with human want and woe. "Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep."‡ Hardness and sin go together; for sin is devotion to self, corrupt and idolatrous; and hardness to others is one of its outward betokenings. Take, then, two young Christian maidens of the upper class in any country, with culture in their minds, with compassion in their hearts, shrinking from the sight of blood, paling at the cry of human agony. Suppose them plunged into such a social condition as that of Rome in the second century, where blood, the blood of God's servants, was ever flowing. You could hardly pass the entrance of a court of "justice," (so called), without seeing the ghastly *equuleus*, a gallows-rack of prolonged torture, erected within the portal, and probably some martyr for the Faith extended and dislocated on it. Or, he was hanging, suspended by the feet, perhaps with those feet actually nailed to an upright beam, while under his head, thus hanging down, a fire was kindled, and his gasping lips

* S. Aug. Tract. in Johann. 27, in fin.
† S. Leo, Serm. in Nat. S. Laur. post init.
‡ Rom. xii. 15.

were compelled to receive the suffocating smoke. Or, they are raking his sides with the cruel steel *scorpions*, and then applying to his lacerations either burning torches, or plates of heated brass. These were daily, hourly spectacles.

Nay, it was not always *he* who thus agonized. Tender maidens, matrons, widows, the aged, were called upon to endure such extremities: and shame, or what would have been shame, but for the glorious cause, was thus added to torment. Pudentiana or Praxedes themselves, might any day have been summoned to take their place among these, their suffering sisters in Christ. Their father, Quintus Cornelius Pudens, must have trembled, every time they went from under his roof, on their errands of charity, lest they should be pointed out by some informer, seized by a lictor, dragged before the prætor, to sacrifice or to die. If compassion, then, be a fellow-feeling for sufferers under such pains as may be ours also, as sharing their nature, we have enough to show what constant martyrdom of heart and soul were endured by these two holy maidens, till their early deaths.

But what was the act of external piety to which S. Pudentiana and her sister devoted themselves? What brought them forth from their father's house, when there was, almost literally, "a lion without—a lion in the way?"* It will take a moment or two to answer this.

Most of the early martyrs had the privilege of shedding their very life-blood for the truth. Their heads were struck off; their sides and limbs were torn; their hands were amputated; or the precious drops were flung from the heavy, lead-weighted scourges, even as the Divine Blood of their great Exemplar had dripped and splashed on the pavement of Pilate's hall. Under this or that special form of torment, it was by effusion of blood that they went to their Lord. Some, indeed, died in other ways; plunged into the Tiber with a heavy stone round their necks, or choked by the foul exhalations of their rayless dungeon.†

* Prov. xxii. 13; xxvi. 13.

† The Mamertine prison in Rome, near the Capitol, where the holy Apostles were imprisoned for nine months before their martyrdom, had a lower dungeon, or *oubliette*, into which the prisoner was let down by ropes from the upper. Even the upper one was dark and dismal enough, though not quite "rayless," like the one below.

But these were exceptions. Even where a miraculous interposition preserved the martyr from previous forms of death, it left him to die, when the sword or the lictor's axe was wielded to behead him, at the third milestone from the City.* Hence, the Christian spectators of a martyrdom, who crowded with thankful joy to witness their brother's good confession and aid him by their prayers, generally saw him make a sanguinary end. The wild beasts of the amphitheatre might have spared him, as they spared Daniel the prophet: the flames of the burning pyre or furnace might have left him untouched, as they left Daniel's companions: these marvels were but preludes to the final consummation of the sacrifice by blood.

Hence, too, the Christians' rejoicing at his victory, and reverence for all that belonged to the "good soldier of Jesus Christ," took the form of an eager desire to possess some of that holy blood. As soon as his soul had exhaled into the Bosom of God, or even before, they would rush forward, and gather up what they could of the precious relic. Cloths, sponges, lachrymatories, anything that came to hand and would serve the purpose, were employed; these are sometimes found, at the present day, in the catacombs. The vessel that contains S. Januarius' blood is one of this kind.

Guards and executioners might beat those zealous Christians back, might threaten them, nay, slay them during this pious work: could they have greater honour than to mingle their blood with that of the expiring martyr? Thus, SS. Basilissa and Anastasia, spectators of S. Peter's martyrdom, were beheaded by order of Nero, for attempting to preserve some of the Apostle's blood. So true was Tertullian's emphatic saying: *Semen Christianorum sanguis martyrum:* those precious streams, unlike the blood of the ordinary dead, seemed to possess a vivifying power. The more freely, it was poured over the Church's field, the thicker and stronger sprang up the spiritual harvest "for life eternal."

To this pious work, SS. Pudentiana and Praxedes gave

* Nothing is more common than to read, in the Acts of the Martyrs, that they were decapitated *tertio ad urbe milliario*, if not at a still greater distance. It was perhaps from a feeling that blood would desecrate, if shed nearer the temples.

themselves. They went forth fearlessly, with a zeal like that of Tobias, to gather the relics of the Saints for Christian entombment,* and their blood as a sacred memorial. Those limbs were one day to be restored, in "the times of the restitution of all things,"† and "shine like the sun, in the kingdom"‡ of the Heavenly Father. That blood would one day be gathered by the hands of angels, and restored to the glorified bodies, even as the angels went up and down the hall and the stairs of Pilate's house, and the rude steep of Calvary, and the summit of the Place of Sculls, gathering each drop of the All-precious Blood, shed to save sinners and make Saints. And, just as the holy angels are represented by the prophet as "weeping bitterly,"§ with an unimaginable angelic sorrow, for the Passion of their Creator, so these two holy virgins, martyrs themselves in heart and will, must be supposed to have wrung their hands, at the sights presented to them on their mission of faith and love. They wept, for their hearts were human; yet, through it all, they rejoiced, for their faith transcended nature. "Love is strong as death."

They are especially noted for their pious courage in collecting the blood and mangled remains of S. Symmetrius and his twenty-two companions in martyrdom. The well in which they secreted the relics still exists, surrounded by a rude and ancient tessellated pavement, in the floor of what was once the palace of their father Pudens, now the church of S. Pudentiana.‖ This is said, very reasonably, to be the most ancient church known in the world. Here, while it was still a secular house,¶ the Prince of the Apostles said his mass, during the years between his arrival in Rome in

* The number of martyrs' bodies which they secured for Christian burial was not less than three thousand.

† Acts iii. 21.

‡ S. Matt. xiii. 43.

§ Isaias xxxiii. 7.

‖ A church well known, by name, to English Catholics, as being that from which the late Cardinal Wiseman derived his title in the Sacred College.

¶ The house, or senatorial palace, of their *grandfather*, the elder Quintus Cornelius Pudens, who must be carefully distinguished from their *father*, of the same name, to avoid mistakes in chronology. The elder lived in the days of S. Peter, the younger, down to those of S. Pius I.

the year 45, and the outbreak of Nero's persecution in 69. That is, when not absent on one of his many apostolical circuits. Under the altar of the church are preserved vases found in the sisters' tombs by Pope Paschal I. in the ninth century: they had contained martyrs' blood. And a fresco on the side wall, of more religious feeling than artistic skill, represents the two sisters engaged in their perilous office. In the church of S. Praxedes, too, (once her house) on the Esquiline, a sculptor of bye-gone days has imaged that Saint, pressing a sponge of blood into a vase.

The pious but harrowing work at length became too much for them. Of S. Praxedes, we read that "unable any longer to endure so wide a devastation of Christians, she prayed to God that, if it were expedient for her to die, He would take her away from these great miseries. Wherefore, on the twelfth of the Calends of August, she was called to the celestial reward of her piety. Her body was taken by Pastor, a priest, to the sepulchre of her father and of her sister Pudentiana, which was in the cemetery of [her grandmother] Priscilla, on the Salarian Way."* From this, as also from the subsequent history, we learn that the heart of Pudentiana broke, first of the two, and that Praxedes fought on in this good fight till she, also, succumbed to the horror of the times. For seventeen hundred years they have joined the triumphant hymn sung around the Throne of the Lamb who redeemed them by His Blood; sung by the martyrs whose blood-relics they had so piously preserved on earth.

But our interest in these two sisters, and in their brothers SS. Novatus and Timotheus, is one still nearer, and may be called national. This comes through their mother Claudia, a daughter, some say, of Caradoc, or Cradock, whose British name was latinised by the Romans into Caractacus. At all events, she was a British maiden. We do not know the original Keltic name she may have borne. She was re-named Claudia; probably after the Emperor,† who had been so struck by the magnanimity of Caradoc's defence before him, that he pardoned and freed him, together with

* Brev. Rom. in Jul. xxxi.

† If, as others say, she was the daughter of Tiberius Claudius Cogidunus, still the Emperor was the cause of her father's first names, and so of hers.

all his family. Claudia had also the surname Rufina, perhaps from having been brought up under the Christian care of a great Roman lady, Pomponia Græcina, who was connected with the house of the Rufi.* Her husband, the younger Pudens, was also a convert and spiritual child of the great Apostle; and his life, when he embraced the faith, entitled him to a place among the Saints.† Thus, his four children had British blood in their veins; though we, Anglo-Saxons, have to resign their immediate relationship. We must yield it to our Welsh neighbours, who may claim so many other Saints as being of their stock. Would that they may indeed, some day, re-assert their kindred, and claim communion with the Saints, as of old!

Caractacus, who had so bravely defended his people against the Roman legions, was still in Rome, when the Prince of the Apostles came to set up his Chair in the Eternal City. As the house of the elder Pudens on the Viminal became, in fact, the first Roman Cathedral, "mother and mistress of all churches,"‡ it was frequented by the "little flock" of believers, to assist at the divine mysteries celebrated by the Apostle. Was the British chieftain ever present among those few? If so, did he ever seek an interview with the Vicar of Christ? It would not be out of all probability to suppose it. Could his manly straight-forward heart have withstood the exhortation of the writer of those epistles, where the same human qualities of manly straightforwardness are sublimed and elevated, by grace, into the Apostolical character?

Caractacus brought in chains to stand before Claudius,

* The names of father and son were identical, Quintus Cornelius Pudens. The elder Pudens was husband to Priscilla, whose name is perpetuated in the cemetery on the Salarian Way, in which her son and grand-daughters, probably with other members of the family, were afterwards buried, as several martyrs had been before.

† The Roman Martyrology says of him, that "having by the Apostle's hand put on Christ in baptism, he preserved the robe of his innocence unspotted, even to the crowning point of his life."

‡ A title which afterwards passed to the basilica of S. John Lateran, originally the palace of the Senator Lateranus, and given by Constantine, on his conversion, to Pope S. Silvester. It was in the baptistery adjoining this church that the Emperor himself is said to have received the grace of his new birth, and was thereby (says the tradition) healed of his leprosy.

has formed the subject for a striking picture. But another, and let us hope, historical picture, would be somewhat as follows.

The British chieftain, no longer chained to the "soldier that kept him,"* but now a free denizen of Rome, is kneeling devoutly in the atrium of Pudens' palace, while S. Peter, in a caracalla, or long vestment, celebrates the Christian sacrifice. His altar is the rude wooden altar-table, now reverently preserved under the lofty baldachino of S. John Lateran. The Senator and his wife Priscilla kneel there, side by side. His young son and namesake, whom S. Peter has baptized, is kneeling by his father. The sacredness of the moment secures him from vain thoughts concerning the young British maiden, Claudia, afterwards to be his wife.† She will continue, with him, both the family name and the Christian tradition, down to the times of S. Pius I. The lady Pomponia, wife of Aulus Plautius, who had conquered Britain, has perhaps managed to elude observation, and to be present there by stealth. For she is a devout Christian, and probably learnt her religion in Britain, while her pagan lord and master was fighting *his* master's battles there. What memories pass through the soul of Caractacus? Is he distracted at his Mass, on the entrance of her whose husband has subdued the country for which he fought so well? The rest of the kneeling and devout assembly is made up of those converted Jews whom the Apostle has brought to the faith; and of others, chiefly slaves, freedmen, and people of the lower class of Romans. "Not many mighty, not many noble" are called, was true of imperial Rome, as well as of cultivated Corinth: though afterwards there were to be "Saints in Cæsar's household" as well.‡ They kneel, or they stand with arms extended; the attitude of prayer among the primitive Christians, in which the Saints also are represented in the catacombs as interceding for the Church, and for their clients. No easy posture to maintain for any length of time, as they know who practise it for the space of five or seven *Paters* and *Aves*, while they fix their thoughts on the lingering pain of Him who, on the Cross "spread forth His hands all the day to an unbelieving people."

* Acts xxviii. 16. † See 2 Tim. iv. 21. ‡ Phil. iv. 22.

A slight sketch, this, from the first century; and perhaps no mere fancy picture.

But let us make a swift shoot down the stream of time, and accompany the priest, S. Timotheus, son of that younger Pudens and Claudia, to his mother's native country. Of course, he yearned for the conversion of his British kinsfolk, for whose national freedom his grandfather Caradoc had so long and nobly fought against Rome. Timotheus was fired with a yet nobler zeal; to deliver them from a worse bondage, into "the liberty of the glory of the children of God."* And this more blessed deliverance, no less than their temporal subjugation, was to emanate from Rome: for the Eternal City, head and fountain of all pagan error in her pride, was ordained to rise out of humiliation and temporal ruin, to be the centre and metropolis of the Faith.

So far, in general: but it would be interesting indeed to know whereabouts in this island S. Timotheus especially laboured. Did he find traces of the work of S. Peter here? Had S. Paul found time to come hither out of Spain, or from the East, between his first and second Roman chain? Did S. Timotheus visit Avalon, that holy place in the west of Britain, and there venerate the spot hallowed by S. Joseph the Arimathæan, and the small wattled oratory of the monk-missioners of Iniswitryn?† Or was it in the fenny East, down among those chill marshes, where, one day, will stand Croyland, and Cambridge, and Peterborough? Or, were his feet "beautiful upon the mountains," by Snowdon, Ingleborough, or further north? This only we know, that the faith preached by S. Timotheus, and the Sacraments he administered, were identically the same that make up our rich inheritance to-day. There has been abundance of "Catholic Progress"‡ since his time; but it is only the spreading of the life-giving tree§ from one and the same root. Its furthest ramification, minutest tendril, least little grape, draws its sap from the stem of the One True Vine.

After an apostolical course in Britain, the holy priest

* Rom. viii. 21.

† See *Afternoons with the Saints*, p. 117.

‡ This paper, with many of the rest, first appeared in the meritorious little serial, so named.

§ Apoc. xxii. 2.

returned to Rome, and was there martyred, two years later. While his mission detained him from the Eternal City, his brother Novatus died there. This death gave occasion to the priest Pastor, to write a letter* to S. Timotheus, still in Britain, which is so full of the spirit of those fervent times, that no child of the nineteenth century ought to read it unmoved. The title "virgin," "blessed virgin," and the like, here given to S. Praxedes, show that she belonged to our Lord by special consecration. Inscriptions of the same kind, existing in the catacombs, abundantly prove the point.

"Pastor, a priest, to his fellow-priest Timotheus, health in our Lord. The venerable virgin Praxedes was in great affliction for the death of her sister Pudentiana. Whereupon, many honourable Christians, together with our holy Pope Pius, came to her, to comfort her. There came likewise to her for the same purpose Novatus your brother, who is also our brother in the Lord, and gave her much consolation: and moreover, by his liberality he greatly refreshed many poor Christians, ministering to them plentifully of his wealth. Being with his sister, he earnestly desired that by her prayers he might obtain mercy from our Lord. He likewise, together with our most blessed Bishop Pius, doth frequently commemorate you at the altar of our Lord. About a month and twenty eight days after he was departed from the virgin Praxedes, he fell sick. Now, our Bishop Pius, together with the virgin Praxedes, having a solicitude for all Christians, enquired where the man of God, Novatus, was, since he appeared not in the congregation. And they were informed that he was detained thence by sickness; then were all very sorrowful. Hereupon, the blessed virgin Praxedes said to our Bishop Pius: 'If it be your Holiness' pleasure, let us go to him; for by your visitation and prayers I do assure myself our Lord will save him.' Upon this her proposal, it was resolved accordingly; and at night we, together with our Bishop Pius, and the virgin of our Lord, Praxedes, went to the man of our Lord, Novatus. And when this holy man heard that this assembly was come to see him, he gave thanks to our Lord for the comfort he received by the visitation of the holy Bishop Pius, together with the virgin of our Lord, and all the rest of us. Thus we

* Fr. Cressy, *Church Hist. of Britain*, pp. 43, 44.

remained in his house eight days and nights. And during the time we were with him, he expressed his will and pleasure to be, to bequeath to yourself and the blessed virgin Praxedes all his estate: and on the thirteenth day following, he departed to our Lord. Of these things we, together with holy Pius, Bishop of the Apostolic See, and the virgin Praxedes, thought meet to give you an account by these our letters, to the end you might acquaint us with your pleasure, how you would have the estate of your brother Novatus disposed of, that your appointment may in all things be observed. Sent by Eusebius, subdeacon of the holy Roman Church."

"To this letter," adds Fr. Cressy, "S. Timotheus his answer follows; though short yet full of piety, and perfumed with the simplicity and Christian charity of that age."

"Timotheus to his brother and fellow-priest Pastor, and to his most holy sister Praxedes, health. We, being desirous in all things without delay to express our service, beseech your holiness to recommend us to the memory and intercession of the Holy Apostles, the holy Bishop Pius, prelate of the Holy Apostolic See, and all the Saints. I, your humble servant, perusing the letter you were pleased to direct to me, am more abundantly filled with joy: for my soul always was, and still continues, resigned to yours. Wherefore your holiness may take notice, that the same is pleasing to us your servant, which was agreeable to our brother Novatus; namely, that what he bequeathed to me, should be at the disposition of the holy virgin Praxedes; and therefore hereby you have full power to employ the said legacy which way soever shall be thought good by you and the said holy virgin."

S. Praxedes, however, died the year before her brother's return: and S. Timotheus himself, as we have said, soon followed her to Heaven by the path of martyrdom. His companion in the noble conflict was Marcus: they are commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on the twenty fourth of March. Pope S. Pius writes thus in an epistle* to Justus, bishop of Vienne in Gaul, who seems to have recently proceeded to his diocese.

* Given with the change of a few words, from Fr. Cressy's quaint but very valuable abridgment of Fr. Alford's *Church History of Britain*, p. 46.

"Pius, bishop of Rome, to his brother Justus, bishop. Before thou didst depart from Rome, our sister Euprepia, if thou dost well remember, assigned the title of her house for maintaining the poor; where we, abiding with our poor brethren, do celebrate Masses. Now, we are desirous to be informed concerning thy affairs, most happy brother, since thou tookest thy journey to that senatorial city of Vienna; as likewise with what success thou hast spread abroad the seed of the Gospel. Those priests who received their first education from the Apostles, and have continued to our days, with whom also we divided the care of preaching the word of faith, having been called by our Lord, do now repose in their eternal mansions. SS. Timotheus and Marcus have ended their days by a happy conflict. Take care, dear brother, that thou follow them, by imitating their zeal, and freeing thyself from the chains of this world. Make haste to obtain, with the Holy Apostles, the everlasting palm of victory: that palm which S. Paul attained by a world of suffering, and S. Peter also, from whom the Cross itself could not take the love of Christ. Soter and Eleutherius, worthy priests, salute thee. Salute in our Lord the brethren who live with thee. Cerinthus, Satan's prime minister, seduces many from the faith. May the grace of Christ dwell for ever in thy heart."

COLLECT.

Hear us, O God of our salvation: that as we rejoice on the festival days of Thy virgins, blessed Pudentiana and Praxedes, so we may be instructed by [their] heartfelt and tender devotion. Through our Lord.

SAINT ELEUTHERIUS,

POPE AND MARTYR.

MAY 26.

A.D. 183.

I.

THE fourteenth* Pope is kneeling in a small underground cemetery, on the slope of the Vatican hill. Absorbed in devotion, he implores the intercession of S. Peter, the first of his line. For the body of the Prince of the Apostles lies there entombed. From the moment when it was brought thither by loving and sorrowing disciples, down from the neighbouring hill,† where he was crucified, this Vatican burying-place—need it be said?—has become a place of pilgrimage and devotion to the faithful. The Christians who entombed Christ's vicar had reverently kissed those pierced hands and feet which they had detached from the inverted cross, as SS. Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus had unnailed his Master and Lord. Those hands of the fisherman, called away from his nets and boat to bear the keys of the kingdom of heaven; those feet, that once tracked their daily way from his lowly fisher's hut to the lake Tiberias, till they were sent on the errand of the Gospel to imperial Rome: gemmed now with the ruby drops of crucifixion, they are wound in linen cloths, with ointments and spices, and the holy tortured body is laid to rest in the catacomb.

* Reckoning, *i.e.* SS. Cletus and Anacletus to have been distinct, so that SS. Linus, Cletus, Clement, and Anacletus, were the four in succession after S. Peter. It is a point on which arguments have long been advanced on either side.

† The *Janiculum*, on which now stands the Church of San Pietro in Montorio, occupying the spot where the cross of the Apostle's martyrdom was planted. It might also be reckoned a portion of the Vatican hill.

And hither come the children of the faith. By stealth in times of persecution, and with tranquil devotion in more peaceful days, and with solemn chants on the day of the annual "Station" afterwards held here,* they come to venerate S. Peter's relics, and beseech him to exert on their behalf his power with God.

An altar-tomb is raised over the spot where the Apostle lies in the subterranean; it was the universal custom in those catacombs that have preserved for us so many precious notices of the faith and practice of primitive times. Our rubrics of to-day ordain that every altar shall be consecrated with relics, deposited beneath the surface of the slab. The injunction forms one of the numberless links between successive centuries of the Church's life; the Church perpetual and unchanging; the Church of "Jesus Christ, yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever."† And if S. John "saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God,"‡ it is especially fitting that their bodies also, when shrouded in death, should rest under the altar whereon *He* lies, the Lamb of God, veiled in mystery and sacrament. "What more honourable," asks S. Maximus of Turin,§ "than to repose under the very altar whereon the Sacrifice is presented to God; where that Victim is offered whereof the Lord is the Priest, according to what is written: 'Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedech?' Rightly therefore are the martyrs placed under the altar, forasmuch as Christ is placed upon the altar. Rightly do the souls of the just repose beneath the altar, because on the altar is offered the Body of the Lord." "Upon the altar," says S. Ambrose,‖ "He Who suffered for all; under the altar, they who were redeemed by His Passion." ¶

* On one of the Saturdays in Ember week, by appointment of S. Leo the Great, himself the first Pontiff laid here in the basilica erected by Constantine. (*Fasti Apostolici, ad A.D. 69*, Appendix.)

† Heb. xiii. 8.

‡ Apoc. vi. 9.

§ Serm. lxiii. De Natal. Sanct.

‖ Epist. xxii. 15.

¶ Add Prudentius' hymn on the martyrdom of S. Vincent, in which lines occur that may be thus rudely rendered:

Now peace is to the just restored:
The altar now to those blest bones
Gives due repose;

S. Eleutherius is attended, on this visit to S. Peter's shrine,* by several of his priests and deacons; they kneel round him in silent prayer, or whispering those psalms which they partly know by heart, partly have had transcribed for them by the consecrated or "devoted" virgins, predecessors of the nuns of our day. The Pope has been saying Mass over the entombed body of Cephas, the Rock, whose power he has inherited. A subdeacon is replacing the sacred vessels, which are costly and jewelled, though the Church is yet comparatively poor. It has always been an instinct with the mystical Spouse of Christ to offer her best, and to procure the best that earth can give, in order to enshrine His Body and Blood. It was the costliness of the sacred Eucharistic vessels that excited the greed of the heathen magistrate in the days of Pope S. Xystus, and caused the martyrdom of his deacon, S. Laurence.

In the midst of this, a subdued sound is going on at the door. It is the sort of contention, where the contending parties are hushed by a reverential feeling, and urge their claim without any wish to disturb. If you listen, you will detect that some who desire to enter are speaking very bad Latin: perhaps the determination to keep them out, among the Pope's attendants, is due, in a degree, to the intruders being "barbarians."

"I am an anchorite, my good brother," says a voice, not loud, but earnest, with a strong northern smack about it, as of one who had come from beyond the Alps. Who knows? he comes, perhaps, from even beyond that German ocean, from the "Saxon shore," where all is gloom and cold, and a perpetual floating and feathering down of dumb snow. So, at least,† the sunny Romans are taught by their geographers to believe; and their children, like old Herodotus, suppose that feathers are always falling from the sky, in those outlandish parts of the earth.

"Reverend sir," answers the ostiarius, respectfully, "I

> For, laid within the holy place,
> And hid below the altar deep,
> They there imbibe
> A fragrance from the heavenly gift
> Wafted around them from above.
> (Passio S. Vinc. Mart. vv. 513—20).

* Appendix E. † Appendix F.

must ask you to wait a little, until his Holiness shall have ended his thanksgiving. He will even now be coming forth. Meanwhile, may I crave to know from what country we possess you?"*

"I come from Britain," was the answer, "and I bear a message to the successor of Peter, from one of the kings of that distant land."

"From Britain?" echoed several, who were waiting around the entrance to the catacomb, and who had been attracted by the foreign (they would have said the barbarian) attire of the new-comer. It was much the same garb as that of the Dacians, and other outlandish captives, whose effigies, even to-day, stand out in relief on the triumphal arches in Rome.

Geta the ostiarius could not repress his lively interest; and, reading in the eager faces of those who surrounded him that they, too, desired to hear news of that far-off corner of the world, he pressed his questions, in a deferential sort of way.

Indeed, it was no common or gaping desire to listen to news, or to gaze upon a new specimen of the *genus* man. Christianity makes people courteous and considerate, in proportion as they are truly Christian. It mortifies mere vulgar curiosity, by giving its disciples worthier objects of interest; and represses, still more, its outward manifestations. But here was an opportunity of learning, at the fountain-head, what Divine Grace was working in the barbarous region which the first of the Cæsars had failed to subdue. Here was a living man standing before them, and he a brother in the Faith, and moreover leading a consecrated life, who could tell them wonderful things.

They had a thousand questions to ask him. Did the Pictish warriors really paint their limbs blue, before they rushed into battle? Did they tattoo themselves with the figures of savage beasts? What became of the sun, when he set in the frozen sea? Were there any Anthropophagi thereabouts, or "men whose heads did grow beneath their shoulders?" Could he tell them aught of that monster of the deep (they did not know his name, whether *kraken* or *octopus*,) whose huge bulk, with giant clasping arms, was

* *Unde te habemus, bonum juvenem?* Tob. v. 6.

said to rise ever and again from the depths of that gloomy ocean, and suck down the stoutest trireme in a fatal embrace? Still more to the point: Were there bishops in Britain, and priests, and consecrated virgins, as in Rome, and in Gaul? Were the holy mysteries celebrated there with the same rites? Did the faithful acknowledge loyal obedience to the Rock of Peter? Or had their great distance, and the perils of journeys to Peter's chair, caused them to become insular in their notions, and tend in any degree to schism?

II.

Such eager questionings, some of them uttered, some *in petto*, all ceased at the appearance of S. Eleutherius, who now issued from the cemetery on his way to his humble domicile.

The Pope is Pope, wherever his feet may tread. He carries with him the fulness of God's teaching, and a world-wide authority. *Mundi magister, atque cœli janitor*:* these are his titles, by Divine commission. "To *thee* will I give the keys;"† those keys, that will never be wrenched from his hand, by Cæsar or by Tsar. Rendered back will they be, by the last Pope, on the Last Day, to Him who sitteth on the Throne:—"The Holy One and the True One; He that hath the key of David; He that openeth, and no man shutteth; shutteth, and no man openeth."‡

"Teacher of the world," as one having authority, and not as the scribes: "Keeper of the gate of Heaven," by absolution and indulgence—by a power that extends over the Church militant, and down to the Church suffering in the prisons of purification—these, in truth, are wonderful

* Hymn for vespers, on the feast of SS. Peter and Paul.

† A party of Oxford men were *lionizing* S. Peter's. One of them stayed behind his companions, gazing up into the great dome, round which, in letters six feet high, runs the inscription—words that form the Apostle's title-deed: *Tu es Petrus*, &c., *et TIBI dabo*, &c. When the others asked him what had so absorbed his attention, he answered: "That terrible word, *Tibi!* If it had only been *Vobis!*" It *was vobis*, on another occasion, as far as the power of forgiveness is concerned; but not for supremacy and universal jurisdiction. S. John xxi. 15—17.

‡ Apoc. iii. 7.

titles for mortal man to bear. We murmur them, and muse upon them, as we now follow the steps of the sainted Pontiff, Eleutherius, who is walking slowly on, aged as much by suffering as by years, while he leans on the hand* of one of his clergy, and of a protonotary on the other side.† Next in order walks the stranger from Britain, who has already opened his commission from King Lucius.

"What did you tell me was your name, my son?" asked the Vicar of Christ, bending on him an encouraging look, as they went.

"Elwan, holy Father," answered the Briton, with deep respect. He was feeling, what every child of the Faith must feel, what the proudest aliens from the Faith have felt, in presence of that personage on earth who stands immediately below the Supreme.

"Elwan," repeated Eleutherius, trying to form his lips to the uncouth sound.

"What a language, to own such names!" whispered one of the clergy, to a deacon walking by his side. "Thinkest thou, my Quintius, thou could baptize an infant, Elthwn?" for the emissary of Lucius had probably given the full allowance of consonants, linguals, and gutturals, even as our Welsh cousins, the ancient Britons of to-day.

"Infant or grown," answered Quintius, "I hope there would be no question of validity.‡ I would as soon baptize him Φλαττοθραττοφλαττοθραττοφλαττοθρίτ." §

"And the British king who sent you," pursued the Pope: "how name you him?"

"Lever Maur."

Quintius gave a scarcely perceptible shrug, and looked at his friend.

"Well," said Eleutherius, with a gentle smile, and without attempting this second combination of sounds; "you are come to Rome; and the first thing must be, to Romanize

* See 4 Kings v. 18.

† A notary, whose office was to record the oral accounts of martyrdom from Christian bystanders, was a very early appointment in the epoch of persecution. The notaries were distributed among the seven quarters of the City, each division being under a protonotary.

‡ Of course, a mere pleasantry of the deacon's.

§ A word from Aristophanes, imitative of the blare of a trumpet.

your name, and that of your prince. You shall be Elvanus, so long as you stay with us."

"And ever after, holy Father."

"As to the king—"

"Nay, I bethink me," said the hermit from Avalon, for such he was: "our king has already a Roman name. His father, King Hlwoell—"*

Quintius laughed outright, in spite of himself.

"—Gave him for his name a Roman version of that which I have just pronounced, and he is generally known as Lucius."

"Good," remarked the Pope, in a like spirit with that of S. Gregory, four hundred years after, musing over the young Angle slaves in the Forum: "Lucius is a name of happy omen.† Light is what he lacketh, and the Lord enables us to send it to him: 'The true light, which enlighteneth every one who cometh into this world.'"

"And yourself, my son," he continued; "from what part of Britain come you, and what is your life there?"

Encouraged thus by the Father of all the faithful, Elwan began his brief history. He told how Timotheus, grandson of that senator Pudens in whose house S. Peter had said his daily Mass, and son of Claudia‡ Rufina, daughter of Caractacus, had yearned to bring to the Faith that race from which his mother came. Accordingly, he had journeyed into Britain, converted many, and disposed King Lucius to receive the "true light." The King, however, like so many others, had been contented with thinking the Faith was very probably true, admiring it at a respectful distance, and intending perhaps to embrace it, at some future day. It was the religion of "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow," that "creeps in this petty pace from day to day,"

> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death—

* Coilus (Hoel) died about the commencement of Hadrian's reign, and was succeeded by his son Lucius, then ten years of age. He had given his son that Latin name, out of regard to the Romans.

† Lever Maur has the same meaning: "Great Light."

‡ 2 Tim. iv. 21. See the preceding sketch of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedes.

aye, and lighted them to the eternal death, awaiting those who cherish their indolent fancies, and postpone God's imperative call.

As then, Felix had put off the Apostle, even so Lucius had put off S. Timotheus, to "a convenient time." But nothing leads us to suppose the Roman governor ever found it convenient to save his soul; whereas, a greater grace awaited the English prince. In his old age—for he began to reign at ten, and that was fifty-eight years ago—the mercy that so long had waited and knocked at his door* was welcomed: and hence the present embassy. He had sent Elwan and Medwin, the former an anchorite of Avalon, the latter a priest, (probably) of the British province of the Belgæ, which we now call Hampshire. His instructions to them were, to push on through Gaul, and to kneel before the chair of Peter. From Gaul, indeed, they might have obtained missioners, with episcopal consecration, and all things absolutely needful. But Gaul was only a province of the Church, even as Britain was now to become; and there is nothing like going at once to the fountain-head. Lucius did not mean to be a Catholic and stop half way. Gallicans, long after his day, would try that experiment, and find it would not be made to work. Lucius will not quit his paganism to become anything less than a thorough "Ultra-montane." "Mountains are round about Jerusalem;"† over them, then, at once, to get at the Holy City, and learn its teachings. So he enjoined on his envoys to bring back with them all the Roman ecclesiastical laws and constitutions. And thus was to be inaugurated that happy state in Britain, which Tertullian described as among the early triumphs of the Cross. The remote regions of the Britons, which had proved impenetrable to the Roman arms, were to be subdued under the faith of our Lord, which should reach them from that same Eternal City.‡

The holy Father lost no time in sending back to Britain, with Elwan and Medwin, two missioners, especially chosen for their important office. It was not every good priest

* Apoc. iii. 20. S. Lucius afterwards made ample amends for this delay, by his holy life, apostolic labours, and probable martyrdom.

† Ps. cxxiv. 2.

‡ "Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita."

who would have the judgment, the tact, the power of *bearing* with things and persons, the "zeal according to knowledge," needed in one who should cope with Satan in a heathen land, and rescue souls from his grasp. These qualities were found in SS. Fugatius and Damianus,* whom the Pope probably consecrated bishops, that they might bear the plenitude of the Church's offices to that distant island.

To finish their history in a few words, the Roman martyrology tells us that "Pope Eleutherius sent into Britain S. Fugatius and S. Damianus, who baptized King Lucius, together with his wife and almost all his people." S. Elwan also is said to have been made a bishop in Rome, before his return to Britain. Beside him, we read of S. Theanus, the first bishop of London, "where our devout King Lucius built a church consecrated to S. Peter, and seated it in the place called Cornhill."† S. Elvanus succeeded him in the See.

After three years' successful labour in this new vineyard of our Lord, the apostolic missioners returned to Rome, to give S. Eleutherius an account of all they had done. "Having performed this," says Matthew of Westminster, "the aforesaid doctors came back into Britain, accompanied with many others, by whose instruction the nation of the Britons, being confirmed in the faith of Christ, became illustrious."

But we must now return to this early Pope's walk through pagan Rome, with Elwan by his side. We may well place the great S. Irenæus on the other side, for he was probably in the Eternal City about this time, to report progress about the Church in Lyons.

III.

In what direction shall we suppose that small band of remarkable men to take their way? Does S. Eleutherius lodge on the Vatican side of the Tiber, or in the heart of the City? Will he have to go over the Pons Milvius, or summon a ferry-boat to put him across "the yellow-stream" for a couple of oboli?‡ Has the house that once be-

* Others call him Diruvianus, apparently without sufficient reason.

† Father Cressy's *Church History of Brittany* (Britain), lib. iv. c. 9. p. 62.

‡ Flavum Tiberim, Hor. Od. i. 2, 13. The obolus was a half-penny.

longed to the elder senator Pudens become a sort of appanage to S. Peter's chair? Does the Pope reside in it, when he is not forced into the catacombs beneath?

We can only say, that he has free choice, and without molestation. For, just now, there are quiet times in the Church, and persecution slumbers. It slumbers, however, like a fierce hound that may wake, at any moment, if you only stir him. The present emperor, Commodus, stays his hand, at least, from Christian blood; and his empress, Marcia, has an admiration for the Faith.* But when Commodus is laid on his funeral pyre, and "cremated" into a handful of imperial dust, to be shut up in a marble urn the size of a hat-box, there is no saying who may occupy his place, or how soon "*Christianos ad leones*" may be yelled again through the streets of Rome, and in its courts of so-called "justice."

Meanwhile, as they tranquilly pursue their path, Eleutherius is making inquiries of the British stranger. He has learnt what Elvanus has to tell him of Lucius and Londinium, and he gladly determines, as the Father of the faithful, to promote the King's pious wish. But now, as to that companion in the embassy, the Medwin of whom this Avalon hermit has spoken—where is he? Medwin, it is answered, is laid up, for the present, in their lodgings in the Suburra.† The shaggy ice-bound Alps, over which they passed southward, the keen winds and blinding snow and almost-starvation of their mountainous journey, have been too much for him. After some days' recruiting, he hopes to present himself to the Holy Father. But the King's request was urgent, and therefore Elwan has presented himself to the Pope alone, on their arrival in the Eternal City.

Then, about Elwan's own life at Avalon: what sort of place was it? how chanced it, the Christian faith was still there, when it had died out from other parts of Britain?

* Commodus, would not, however, protect the Christians against the Senate, which was seldom favourable to them. Other Emperors, too, might be personally mild or indifferent; yet they persecuted, to gain the Senate's esteem. Thus, S. Apollonius was condemned, in the midst of that tranquil period in the Church's history which had been gained, partly at least, by the victory of the "Thundering Legion" in Germany, in 174.

† A quarter of Rome between the Viminal and Quirinal hills.

Had Avalon ever been a bishop's see? Who had originally founded it?

Thereupon, the envoy began that wonderful history which has been outlined elsewhere.* He told how, in the days of Arviragus, great-grandfather to Lucius, a company of twelve men came, from foreign parts, into the west of Britain: Orientals, most of them, to judge by their attire and speech. They were led by one, venerable of aspect, to whom they paid great deference; though all, indeed, were of exemplary gravity of demeanour, showing forth

> A sweet attractive kind of grace,
> A meek assurance given by looks—
> Eternal comfort in a face,
> The lineaments of Gospel books.

And this leader was named Joseph—his place of birth, Ramathaim Sophim, or Arimathæa, in the Holy Land.

A look of surprise, and great interest, from the Holy Father, here commented on the narrative. He gently bade Elwan proceed.

Joseph, as the envoy went on to say, came to announce the Gospel to the western Britons, so far as preaching to them accorded with the hermit-life which he and his companions were called to lead. He told the heathen natives many wondrous things of the share he had been permitted to take, in tending the Body of the Lord Who hung upon the Cross. How, when six hours had sped, from the noon of Good Friday—when the preternatural darkness had melted into the calm sad evening light, while the awe-struck multitudes, lingering still on Calvary, gazed tearfully on the pale and bloodless Form extended above them—he had gone down to the Prætorium, to demand an audience of Pilate, and had "begged the Body of Jesus." How, assisted by S. Nicodemus, he had lowered that sacred Body with all tenderness, as a priest takes the Blessed Sacrament into his consecrated hand; and had laid it upon the lap of the Dolorous Mother, seated to receive it, at the Cross's foot. How, even as the priest, with genuflexions and adoring love, deposits again the ciborium, covered with its white

* *Afternoons with the Saints*, p. 103, &c. In that sketch (p. 107, note) Arviragus is stated to have been presumably Caractacus; whereas he was his brother-in-law. Boadicea was sister to Caractacus (Caradoc).

veil, in the tabernacle, when some faithful heart has communicated in "the Flesh of the Son of Man, and His Blood" —so to him, Joseph, the unutterably high privilege was given, of laying in his own new tomb that lifeless, life-giving Body, till the Soul should rejoin it from Limbus, after the brief Three Days of the prophecy.

S. Joseph, (pursued Elwan), had moreover recounted to the Britons other interesting matters, though of interest in a subordinate sphere. The Jews, venting their hate of the Lord on such of His disciples as they could reach, had seized him, with the small devoted household of Bethany, and two other faithful ones.* They had placed their victims in an open boat without oars or sails, and shoved them off upon the wide Mediterranean sea, to sink or swim, or starve. But a gentle gale sprang up at the Divine bidding, or the wings of unseen angels fanned the sail-less boat, and she rippled steadfastly out upon the inland ocean, sighting neither Cyprus nor Crete on her passage. She held right on, as if conscious of a providential mission, to the wonder of such merchant vessels or other craft as neared her, on their devious course. At length, the rocky outline of Melita rose to view—that Melita that was to shipwreck an Apostle, who was at the actual moment a persecutor. Then, cleaving a middle passage between Tunis and Sicily, then again between Algeria and Sardinia, the fated boat, without aid from helm or rudder, turned northward, and made straight for Marseilles.

The rude Gaulish fishermen received them kindly, as the barbarous islanders of Melita afterwards received S. Paul. The work of evangelizing began. S. Lazarus and his two holy sisters remained in the place. He that had died in Bethany, and been raised again to preach the power of his Divine Friend, who called him from the tomb after four days' burial, became Bishop of Marseilles. As to S. Martha, "by her wondrous holiness of life, and charity, she drew the hearts of all the people of Marseilles in love and admiration; betaking herself, with some of the most honourable women,† to a place sequestered from men; where she lived

* Maximin, who, after landing with the rest, became Bishop of Acqs; and a disciple named Marcella.

† See Acts xiii. 50; xvii. 4, 12.

in the highest repute for piety and prudence, and at length, having long before predicted her own death, and illustrious by miracles, departed to the Lord."

"But the Magdalene, habituated to prayer and [her station at] the feet of the Lord, in order to enjoy that better part she had chosen, of contemplating the heavenly bliss, retired into a vast cavern in a lofty mountain, where she lived for thirty years, severed from all human intercourse; and every day during that space of time was taken up by angels, to hear the Divine praises in Heaven on high."*

IV.

These details were not new to S. Eleutherius, nor to S. Irenæus, if he now walks by his side. They had long since been reported from Gaul, and the cave of the Magdalene was shown, then, as now; a place of devout pilgrimage. But what concerned S. Joseph and his companions was not so well known. That small company had pushed on northward through Gaul, and had been lost out of sight. Had they safely crossed the perilous northern strait? Had they converted many among the barbarous islanders? Or had they been crowned with martyrdom in the attempt?

The Saint of Arimathæa, with his eleven companions (answered Elwan), had struck awe, and finally belief, into the mind of Arviragus, by a notable miracle. S. Joseph brought from his Eastern home a staff of thorn-wood, cut from some such brake as furnished that thorny Crown, which he had with tender care detached from the drooping Head of the Crucified. It was winter when the twelve reached Avalon, the place where the still-pagan Arviragus had given a portion of land to each.† To attest the truth of the Gospel he proclaimed, S. Joseph planted his staff in the ground; and behold, it forthwith budded and blossomed into a fragrant thorn-tree, as the slips taken from it do, even now, at every Christmas-tide.

* Brev. Rom. in 29 Julii.

† These portions of land have been known from time immemorial as the Twelve Hides of Glastonbury, and form a strong corroboration of the tradition, also immemorial, of the coming of S. Joseph of Arimathæa to the place.

Then, in the marshy grounds of Avalon, half islands and half mere, the small huts of this hermit-community arose round the scarcely larger wattled oratory, which they dedicated to the most holy Mother of God. Dedicated? nay, the place became holy by more than human dedication:* and even when the Britons had yielded to the Saxon invader, and been driven from the plains and grassy hills of Somersetshire, this spot, then known as Glastonbury, was styled in ancient charters "the fount and origin of all religion in Britain."

Such was the story of Avalon; an old story, like many another true one, overlaid in process of time, obscured by poetry and fable, till sober men have been tempted to throw away the whole, rather than labour to disentangle the true from the fabulous.†

We may at least rescue from oblivion some quaint stanzas of an old English chronicle,‡ of about the middle of the fifteenth century, which report the belief of the day. Why should that belief be groundless? What disproof of it can we offer, in this critical, sceptical nineteenth century? The stanzas tell us how the Saint of Arimathæa baptized the British prince, and gave him a shield marked with his own blood, which was *afterwards* called the shield of S. George.

First, the chronicler narrates in prose,

How Joseph converted this King Arviragus, and gave him a shield of arms that we call S. George's arms, which arms he bare ever after;

* Appendix G.

† "There was once an Arthur and a Charlemagne, though the same creative power [of legend] has invested them with attributes, or at least ascribed to them actions, above the capacity of man. When such preposterous claims are asserted in favour of any historical character, we are provoked to reject, not merely them, but the very existence of the personage. They injure his fame. Such, in reference to Arthur, for instance, was *the complaint of* [William] *the Malmesbury librarian, one of the most judicious of our early historians*. The fate of the British monarch, he well observes, is deserving of something better than a fabulous commemoration" (*Dublin Review*, Jan. 1838, p. 112). This testimony is quoted, because it is precisely William of Malmesbury who, in his *Antiquities of Glastonbury*, has recorded the legendary origin of that hallowed spot, the glory of his native Somersetshire; and has therefore been taxed with monkish credulity, and a biassed partiality for his former neighbourhood.

‡ Hardynge's Chronicle, edited by Ellis, p. 147, &c.

and thus became that arms to be the King's arms of this land, long before S. George was born. And as Maryan, the profound chronicler, saith, he bare of silver, in token of cleanness, a cross of gules, signification of the Blood that Christ bled on the Cross; and for it must needs of reason be called a cross (c. 48).

Then, in verse, which to modern ears is hardly distinguishable, in parts, from prose:

Joseph converted this King Arviragus,
By his preaching, to know the law Divine,
And baptiz'd him, as written hath Nennius
The chronicler, in Britain tongue full fine,
And showed him a figure of Christ's pine;*
And gave him then a shield of silver white,
A cross endlong and outward, full parfite.†

Of his own blood, which from his neck did rin,
He made that cross, in signification
Of Christe's Blood, that ran out fro within
Upon the Cross, at His expiration—
Which shield, by Joseph's exhortation,
He‡ bore on him in fields of war alway,
And in his banners and coat-armour gay.

These armès were usèd through all Britain
For a common sign, each man to know his nation
From ènemies; which now we call, certain,
S. George's arms, by Nennius' information;
And thus this armès, by Joseph's creation,
Full long before S. George was generate
Were worshipt here, of mykell elder date.

If this bit of antiquarianism from the fifteenth century has led us away from the Rome and the Pope of the second, it must be remembered how great an interest attaches to the evangelists of one's native land. We, who gaze up to the golden cross that surmounts S. Paul's, rising bright and serene above the din, the mammon-worship, and even the smoke of London, are fond to believe that our ancient metropolitan church has more than a nominal association with the Apostle of the Gentiles. We love to dwell on the possibility, if not more, that "Paul, an old man," in the interval of his being (as both before and after) "a prisoner of Jesus Christ"§—coming forth from his chains in Rome

* Pain, Passion. † Perfect. ‡ That is, Arviragus.
§ Philem. 9.

to preach, going back to his chains in Rome, to die—found his way across the Pyrenees from Spain into Gaul, and so made for Albion.

S. Paul in Londinium, S. Joseph in Avalon, perhaps at one and the same time; Paul the Apostle, Joseph the rector of a small community; the one with a glorious martyrdom before him, the other with an obscure and peaceful death; the first laid to rest, after his long labours and martyrdom, under the high altar of a great basilica, in the Eternal City, the second, reposing, forgotten, in the hermit-enclosure round the little "ealde kirche" in our Western Britain;* the Apostle, known throughout the world by his name and preaching, invoked in the Church's litanies, named in her *confiteor* and in the canon of the universal Mass, while the name of Joseph of Avalon lingers in an almost discredited tradition, cherished by some Catholic hearts in a desecrated land! Here are contrasts to suggest calm and loving thought, which runs up finally into the all-embracing principle wherewith the Psalmist ends his long hymn of adoration—"Let every spirit praise the Lord."

COLLECT.

Look upon our weakness, O Almighty God; and because the burden of our own [ill] doing weighs us down, may the glorious intercession of Thy martyr and pontiff blessed Eleutherius defend us. Through our Lord.

* Unless, indeed, he returned to die in the Holy Land, as is asserted in the *Roman Martyrology*: a fact which would not be inconsistent with his having founded the hermitage at Iniswitryn. The place seems to have become a deserted spot, some time after the death of the first hermits there. William of Malmesbury compares its re-discovery by SS. "Phaganus and Deruvianus" (*sic*) to Moses penetrating the interior of the desert (Exod. iii. 1.)

SAINT MARGARET,

QUEEN OF SCOTLAND.

JUNE 10.

A.D. 1097.

SCOTLAND was once a country fertile in Saints.

Turgot, or Theodoric, a monk of Durham, afterwards Archbishop of S. Andrew's, confessor and biographer to S. Margaret, is not romancing when he says that, in her day, "a great number of persons in the kingdom of Scotland, dispersed in various localities, and secluded in their solitary cells, lived, in the flesh indeed, but not according to the flesh, with great self-severity; leading upon the earth a life angelical." And this vigour of the religious life of the country was owing, in no slight degree, to the holy Queen's own pious efforts and life-long example. Good, as well as evil, has a wonderful vitality; they both continue in their effects, long after the personal agent has gone to his account, for reward or doom.

Such was Scotland, in ancient times. How mysterious the ways of Providence, by whose permissive will that noble people, so firm and steadfast, so capable of solid virtue and persistent self-denial under the touch of grace, has now so utterly lost the ancient and holy Faith. Faith of their fathers; whither has it fled? The Andersons whom you meet there by the score, have no more pious thought of S. Andrew than they have of S. Boswell, whose name survives, almost grotesquely, in the railway station whence you branch off the Edinburgh main line to get on to Kelso. And many a Margaret, north of the Tweed, takes her Puritan hymn-book with a set face, on the saubboth, and goes to hear the Calvinism of some stern-featured disciple

of John Knox, with small remembrance of the gentle Queen whose name she has inherited, and little of the spirit that has endeared it to Catholic hearts. And then the children; poor little weans! If heresy is grim and unlovely in mature life, how does it look in that tender age that ought to be so fresh and dewy with the dew of baptismal grace? Those young ones are unconscious victims to the Moloch of a proud schism that has immolated them, ere they knew their right hand from the left.

May the sons of S. Benedict at Fort Augustus, and of S. Ignatius at Edinburgh, and at Glasgow, and Galashiels, gather more than a gleaning from those fields which, to outward eyes, promise so poorly for God's garner. May the nuns of S. Margaret's, who pray and teach, full in view of the Edinburgh Castle in which the saintly Queen reigned and merited and died—may they win the daughters of Strathclyde and Caledonia to a truer sense of the eternal verities, and to a religion more benign than their present misbelief.

Turning from the Edinburgh of to-day, with its keen intellectual life and its mutilated Christianity, endeavour to reproduce to your mind's eye the old Dun Edwin* of eight centuries ago. Then from that castled crag, whose fortress frowns over the small town beneath, you may hear the toll of a passing bell. Its mournful sound tells the bereaved Catholic Scots that a life of charity, prayer, mortification is ending, and a life of glory, of bliss and reward, is to begin. Scotland is going to lose out of sight its sainted Queen, who now lies dying in the western tower of Edinburgh Castle.†

For six months, she has been tried in the furnace of affliction, having been stricken down by the sickness which finally sent her to God. Now, moreover, she has just been

* Edwinsburgh, or Dun Edwin. The name betokens that the fortress was in possession of the first Christian King of Northumberland, in the seventh century. King Edwin was a convert of S. Paulinus, the companion of S. Augustine, and first Archbishop of York; a saintly prelate who had accompanied Queen Edelburga from the south of England, as her confessor. The King was baptized by him in 627. Edwin fortified the rock against the barbarous tribes of the North, and it has ever since been called by his name.

† The tower bore her name, and was demolished in the siege of 1573.

made a widow at the hands of the English. Almost before that bell has ceased its tolling, the garrison of Dun Edin will burn with thirst of revenge. For men will wildly spread the woeful tidings that their King, Malcolm Canmore, and his firstborn, Prince Edward, heir to the Scottish crown, have both perished before the walls of Alnwick Castle.

This was how it came about.

"William Rufus, who came to the throne of England in 1087, surprised the castle of Alnwick in Northumberland, and put the garrison to the sword. Malcolm demanded restitution; which being denied, he besieged it.* The English garrison, being reduced to great extremity, offered to surrender, and desired the King to come, and receive the keys with his own hand; but the soldier, who presented them to him upon the point of a spear, by a base treachery, thrust the spear into his eye, whilst the King was stretching out his hand to take the keys; and killed him. His son, Edward, carried on the siege to revenge the death of his father; but, advancing too eagerly, was slain in an assault. Whereupon the Scots were so much afflicted, that they raised the siege and retired, having buried their King and Prince at Tynemouth." †

Such were the heavy tidings brought to S. Margaret on her death-bed, and brought by her surviving son Edgar. But she seems to have known all beforehand, by supernatural communication. The expedition into Northumberland had been undertaken against her strenuous advice and entreaties: it is said to have been the first time that Malcolm had failed to follow her counsels. For Margaret, in proportion to her sanctity, was gifted with great human prudence, even where she may not have had a distinct gift of prophecy. "To be innocent, is Nature's wisdom:" and, still more, to be united with God is to see, in His mirror, many things, even of the concerns of earth, which are hidden from the mere children of earth. "Through Thy commandment," says the Psalmist, "Thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies. . . I have understood more than all my teachers: because Thy testimonies are my meditation. I have had understanding above ancients: because I have sought Thy commandments." ‡

This presentiment, or foreknowledge, would partly have

* Appendix H. † Butler, in June 10. ‡ Psalm cxviii. 98—100.

softened the double blow inflicted on her affectionate heart. Besides, she was now in her own agony, and on the threshold of the eternal world. When her precious soul is released from the body it has dwelt in and sanctified, then the earthly tabernacle will recover the freshness and beauty of its youth; and in the placid sleep of death, the rose upon her cheek will almost delude her sorrowing attendants to believe that, after all, she is in the repose of slumber. But at this moment of death-agony, she undergoes the common lot in its physical humiliation,* and struggles, as we all must, to snatch a few more breathings from the conqueror, Death. Pallid and worn out, she whispers an intreaty to those around, to commend her soul to our Lord. Her confessor, the good monk of Durham, had left her, some months before, to resume his monastic life beside the body of S. Cuthbert. It is probably the Bishop of Edinburgh who now ministers to his dying Queen. In her emaciated hands, that can hardly grasp it, is the celebrated "Black Cross," containing a portion of the True Cross of Calvary. She had brought this precious relic from England, perhaps from her native Hungary: she has always had it in especial veneration, and kept it constantly by her, during life.†

Her last *Miserere* is hardly said, when Prince Edgar rushes into the death-room, with tidings of death from Tynemouth: from the obsequies of his father and brother he comes to close his saintly mother's eyes. But not before she has made her last act of conformity with the Divine Will. Hearing the mournful announcement, she gathers up her small remaining strength, to say: "I praise Thee and give Thee boundless thanks, O Almighty God! Who in these last moments, before my departure hence, hast caused me to endure these afflictive sufferings, and by the furnace of them, as I trust, hast in Thy goodness purified me from my remaining sins!" In all this, as her biographer goes on to say, she resembled Job in his sufferings, and sinned not by her lips, nor spoke any foolish thing against God.

S. Margaret's devotions during life had been couched in the language of the Church's liturgy and solemn offices. This is noticeable in the lives of the Saints. They not only believe every jot and tittle of the Church's teaching; so much

* Phil. iii. 21. † Appendix I.

as this, every Catholic does, knowing it to be coincident and coextensive with God's revelation. But, moreover, the spiritual instincts and the emotions of Saints are cast in the mould of their creed; the rule of belief is the standard of their prayer,* and each pulsation of their hearts is ever beating in loyal unison with the dogma and discipline of the Spouse of the Lord. They *feel*, as well as know, "the holy doctrine delivered to them."

So now S. Margaret. Conscious that her last moment was come, she turned to Him Whom she had received shortly before, in the Adorable Communion; and prayed those words of the Church's ritual, which the priest whispers at the altar, before communicating himself:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Who by the will of the Father, with the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, hast by Thy death given light to the world, deliver me"—

So far she spoke, and no further. The great deliverance had come, and Margaret went to her reward, on the 10th of June, 1097, having reigned a quarter of a century, and lived about double that space of time. Toll out, bells of Edinburgh Castle! not so much that a Saint has been translated from earth to Heaven, for *that* is matter rather for a joyous peal. But toll, because the Catholic life of a noble nation is thereafter to be quenched in a dark forbidding misbelief, that looks as if it were going to last till the Day of Judgment.

If the end of S. Margaret's life was thus afflictive, it is no less true that she had been nurtured, from the first, in the school of affliction. Her life as Queen of Scotland was indeed a happy one, for it was worthily filled with great deeds for God; she occupied a high position, and from thence her light had shone on all around, teaching them to glorify her Father in Heaven. This must ever be happiness; for it implies conformity with that all-beautiful and divine Will, which is the very bliss of Heaven. It implies the

* *Lex credendi lex orandi.* S. Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises* has left us some rules "ut cum Ecclesia *sentiamus*;" not merely assenting and holding firmly in the intellect, but keeping every doctrine and practice closely in the heart, with a loyal affection.

advance and extension of God's Kingdom, which is ever the deep yearning of His Saints. But those prosperous years of hers had been preceded by a youth of uncertainty and straitness; for she was born in exile, and then not free from danger in England. To show this will take us for a moment into the annals of the eleventh century.

Britain had always been a prey to incursions from the adjacent coasts of Europe. The Saxons first, or Angles, came in upon the British Celts; then the Danes, then the Norsemen, upon the Saxons. The Britons had been Romanized, civilized, Christianized; and by their very civilization became an unequal match for ruder heathens, savages and pirates. These brought their own name—Angles—from that "angle" of territory—*ille terrarum angulus*—between the Elbe and the Baltic; and they gave the name to England. These hardier pagan Angles forced their way in; the more enervated Brito-Roman Christians went to the wall.* Then, after a century and a half of dominant heathenism, the Saxons received the faith from S. Augustine of Canterbury in the south, from S. Paulinus in the north. In process of time, the same history was re-enacted; fierce idolaters broke into Christian England from the east—from Denmark this time—partially drove the converts of Augustine and Paulinus before them, martyred King Edmund in Suffolk, and occupied large portions of the island.

Thus, at the period of S. Margaret's birth, you have the Britons, chiefly barricaded for six centuries in Wales and Cornwall, not to speak of the emigration of them that had colonized Brittany. You have the Saxons, Christians now, and settled through the length and breadth of the land, with a vigorous Catholic life, and a multitude of Saints; but forced to defend themselves against the new enemy. You have the Danes, in successive bands, breaking in upon them during a period of years, carrying fire and sword and devastation, sending martyrs to Heaven, pillaging monasteries, slaying priests and nuns, and establishing a dynasty. Then, finally, the descendants of those very Northmen, who in

* Went literally to the wall, and through it, too: inasmuch as they retired bodily into the fastnesses in the west of the island, and placed the chains of Welsh mountains and Cornish crags between themselves and the invaders.

their pirate galleys had coasted southward from their old Scandinavian home, and found a fair settlement in France—these now steer for the white cliffs of Albion, and appear on English soil as Norman conquerors.

Thus, the life of our Saint brings us across such historical characters as Edmund Ironside, Canute the Danish invader, Saint Edward the last reigning prince of the Anglo-Saxon line, and William Duke of Normandy, afterwards King of England. Others, also, appear on the scene—two crowned Saints, reigning and serving God on the continent. These are, S. Henry, who from being Duke of Bavaria, has been elected to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire; and S. Stephen,* the Apostolic King of Hungary, whose memory survives in the grand old cathedral of Vienna.

All these personages enter into the life of S. Margaret, in various ways. She was grand-daughter to Edmund Ironside, and great-niece to S. Edward. On Ironside's assassination at Oxford in 1017, Canute, already in possession of Mercia and the northern provinces, caused himself to be proclaimed king of all England. The two young sons of the Ironside, Edmund and Edward, were also entrusted to him. At first, Canute treated them kindly, as though intending to secure to them their lawful succession to the West-Saxon crown. But, urged by an ever-growing ambition, and coveting their domains, he sent them into Sweden, which was partly under his sway, with secret instructions to their tutor, Valgar, to make away with them. Valgar, however, abstained from embruing his hands in the innocent blood of these young princes; and, after concealing them for some time, sent them privately to S. Stephen in Hungary, and made Canute believe that he had executed his impious commands.

S. Stephen received the young princes with the greatest affection, and brought them up like his own sons. Here Edmund died, in the flower of his age. Edward, surnamed Outre-mer, as being exiled from his country, had often accompanied S. Stephen to the Court of the Emperor, S. Henry; and grew so greatly in his favour, that the

* About the year 1000 A.D., Pope Silvester II. sent to S. Stephen, then *waywode*, or duke, of Hungary, a royal crown, constituting him King. He also sent him a cross, with the special privilege to himself and his successors, to have it carried before them.

Emperor married him to his niece,* the Princess Agatha. They had a son, styled Edgar the Atheling—or "young noble"—and two daughters, Christina and Margaret. The latter became "in very deed," says one of her biographers, "a pearl† of great price to England and Germany, the sources of her life, to Hungary, the place of her birth, and to Scotland, where she was to live, to reign, and to die the precious death of the Saints."

Canute the usurper being dead, his sons Harold and Hardicanute wore the English crown, in succession. But the country soon shook off the Danish yoke, and in 1041 called S. Edward the Confessor from his exile at the Norman Court, to reign over England. He was paternal uncle to Edward, S. Margaret's father. Having resigned, by mutual vow of himself and his pious consort Edith, all prospect of a direct heir to inherit his throne, he determined to make his nephew and namesake his successor also. Accordingly, Aldred, Bishop of Worcester, proceeded on an embassy to the Hungarian court; and Edward Outremer, with his three children, landed for the first time on the shores of their ancestors, and were received in London with great demonstrations of joy.

This was in 1054. Three years after, Edward, having declined the Confessor's proposal to abdicate at once in his favour, died a holy death, and was buried in S. Paul's. The saintly King himself soon passed to his reward; and Edgar the Atheling's claim was not heard amid the opposing pretensions of Harold, son of the late Earl Godwin of Kent, and William, Duke of Normandy. These were decided at the battle of Hastings, in 1066. Edgar now saw that the only safety for his mother and sister Margaret, as for himself, lay in a renewed exile. His other sister, the Princess

* Unaccountably called his daughter, by Father W. Leslie, S.J., who wrote an Italian life of S. Margaret, in the seventeenth century, and printed it in Rome. S. Henry, as all his chroniclers testify, lived in holy virginity with his wife, S. Cunegunde. Agatha was probably daughter to his brother, Count Bruno. She was also sister to the Queen of Hungary.

† It need hardly be said, that the name Margaret signifies a *pearl*. In French, the name is given to the daisy, as a pearl-like flower. The homily in the Breviary, appointed for the feast of S. Margaret, is from S. Matthew xiii., the parable of the "pearl of great price."

Christina, was already safe in religion, and finally died Abbess of Wilton. The wanderers, then, took ship, intending to return to Hungary; but the vessel was providentially driven northward by a violent storm, and Margaret was thus introduced to the sphere which she was so amply to fill, to the Divine glory and the benefit of innumerable souls.

Ploughing its way up the Frith of Forth, this ship, with its precious freight, touched land at a point of Fifeshire, afterwards called S. Margaret's Bay, or S. Margaret's Hope. Those were days of rude contrivances for the accommodation even of the high-born; and the story goes that S. Margaret had to be carried ashore on the shoulders of a stalwart man of Fife. Before he reached the bank, however, the Scot (or, as some relate, the horse, on which she maintained an uncertain hold), stumbled, and threw the Princess into the water. Whereupon, one of the Hungarian nobles, who had accompanied the royal party throughout their wanderings, cast towards her his knightly belt, with the words—there was no time for courtlier phrase—"Grip fast!" The Princess obeyed, and was drawn safely to land; or else, she might have shared the fate which the great Scottish poet has assigned to another high-born maiden in the waves of "the stormy Frith."*

To finish this episode; when King Malcolm knew what a "pearl" had thus been rescued from the waters of the Forth, he gave to her preserver a donation of as much land as he could ride round with a fleet horse, within a given time, and that no stinted time. And these self-same estates, with the name of Leslie, and the motto of his two words in season—GRIP FAST—have descended in a right line from that day to this. It is a good motto to keep in mind, when we are tempted to yield, either a point of principle, or a salutary practice of devotion, at the bidding of human respect or of a self-indulgent ease. He who grips fast, with a resolution and a tenacity that might be called dogged by men of more uncertain minds or feebler will, is likely not to lose his hold on eternal life. For the precept is: "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life." And again: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

* Sir Walter Scott's exquisite plaint on the drowned maiden, Rosabelle Saint-Clair, in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

At Dumferline, not far from that point of Fifeshire where the vessel touched, King Malcolm III., surnamed Caen-more, or Great-head,* resided, with his court. An uncourtly assemblage, enough; for the times and the nation were rude, and the monarch himself uncultivated and illiterate. So much the more employment, so much the greater merit, for the young Princess Margaret, when she is introduced to the sphere of influence awaiting her. She will have much to do, much to refine, and to reform. But let us first have a word about Malcolm.

He is no stranger to us, if we remember Shakspeare's great Scottish tragedy. Eldest son of Donald, or Duncan, VII., who was murdered by the usurper Macbeth, Malcolm had fled to England, and resided for some time at the court of the Confessor.

> The son of Duncan,
> From whom this tyrant holds his due of birth,
> Lives in the English court, and is received
> Of the most pious Edward, with such grace,
> That the malevolence of fortune nothing
> Takes from his high respect.†

Besides affording him hospitality, however, the Confessor gave Malcolm a force of ten thousand men, to reinstate him in his rights.

> Gracious England hath
> Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men:
> An older and a better soldier none
> That Christendom can boast.

This "good Siward," Earl of Northumberland, and the large force under him, proved an efficient aid to Malcolm and his friends. They defeated the usurper; who, after a vigorous and seemingly not a cruel reign of some seventeen years, was slain by the hand of Macduff, thane or earl of Fife, in requital of the savage massacre of his wife and children by the tyrant's orders. This victory was gained in the year 1056 or 1057, and Malcolm was thereupon crowned in the Abbey of Scone,‡ on that celebrated "stone of

* Appendix J.

† *Macbeth*, act iii. sc. vi.

‡ So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone,

is Malcolm's invitation, with which the tragedy of *Macbeth* concludes.

destiny," to which the Scottish annals have ever attached so much importance.

When Edgar Atheling, then, with his mother and his sister Margaret, came to be thrown upon his shores and his hospitality, Malcolm hastened to show that prosperity had not hardened his heart. His own acquaintance with adverse fortune had taught him, like Dido, to compassionate and succour the distressed. He gave the fugitives the best reception his kingdom could afford. The fierce Norman sent to him from his newly-established throne in London, to demand of Malcolm to deliver them up; but the Scottish King rejected the proposal with indignation. A war between England and Scotland was the consequence, in which the Scots gained three successive victories. William finally sent his son Robert with a considerable force. He encamped on the Tyne, and built there a strong and stately castle, still called—by a misnomer, after eight centuries of time—New Castle. A peace was concluded soon afterwards, by which Cumberland was to remain with the Scots; and a cross was erected on Stanemoor, to mark the limits of the two kingdoms.

Meanwhile, a more important negotiation was being transacted in Dumferline; one that was to promote the good of Scotland for centuries to come. Malcolm, having had opportunities of observing the sanctity and good qualities of the Princess Margaret, demanded her hand in marriage. Devoted as she was to prayer and contemplation, the prospects of a crown could have no charms for her, in themselves. But a particular inspiration, probably, and a strong act of faith to look forward, and see the capabilities for God's glory and the good of souls, that might open out

The legendary account of this celebrated stone represents it as that on which Jacob slept when the vision was granted to him (Gen. xxviii. 18, 22), and which he consecrated as a memorial of the Divine mercies. Its historical record is, that it was brought from Scotia (the north of Ireland), during the Scottish immigration to Caledonia, deposited for a time in Iona, and thence transferred to Scone for the coronation of the Scottish Kings. Scone was a royal city at the beginning of the tenth century, and the first monastery built there was probably of that date. The stone was carried to England by Edward I., after his successful invasion, and has remained ever since in Westminster Abbey, under the chair in which our Kings are crowned. After its loss, the Scottish Kings were still crowned at Scone, both before and after the Union.

for her zeal, determined her to accept this great position. Her marriage and coronation were solemnized at Dumferline in 1070, when she was twenty-four years of age; and thenceforward, Margaret entered upon her bright and beneficent career.

With the King himself, she had no difficulty, from the first. Malcolm was like one of the granite blocks of his native land; rugged and unpolished, but of sterling and valuable material. When once his queen had gained the ascendancy over him, which was due to her wifely and engaging qualities, to her manifestly sincere piety and great powers of administration, he left not only himself but his kingdom in her hands. This great influence "she only exerted to make religion and justice reign, to render her subjects happy, and her husband one of the most virtuous kings that have adorned the Scottish throne. She softened his temper, cultivated his mind, polished his manners, and inspired him with the most perfect maxims and sentiments of all Christian virtues. In the midst of the weighty concerns and cares of a kingdom, Margaret always kept her heart disengaged from the love of the world, and recollected in God. The continual attention of her soul to Him in all her actions, assiduous prayer, and the constant practice of self-denial, were the means by which chiefly she attained to this perfection. At the same time, her prudence and care in all things, her application to public and private affairs, her watchfulness in providing for the good of her subjects, and the wonderful ease and wisdom with which she discharged every duty of the regal authority, showed her most extensive genius, to the astonishment of foreign nations."

Chief among her domestic cares was the pious training of her children, who derived from her example a standard of goodness which they maintained in their after lives. Of her six sons, Edgar, Alexander, and David reigned in succession, after Malcolm's death. The eldest, Edward, named from the Confessor, and a youth of the highest promise, perished with his father, as we have seen, before the walls of Alnwick. Ethelred also died young, in religion. He had been made Abbot of Dunkeld; his name is had in veneration. Edmund is said to have lived, in England, the life of a pious recluse. Edgar reigned happily for nine

years. In his mild government, his equity, beneficence, and sweetness, he is reported to have called to men's minds S. Edward the Confessor. Alexander succeeded him on the Scottish throne, and reigned seventeen years. He was just, charitable, religious, munificent. Among his pious works was the foundation of the monastery at Inchcolme, on the Forth. David, the youngest, had a reign of nearly thirty years. The spirit of the time had already become milder; he was therefore able to carry out more perfectly his mother's work of civilizing all classes of the Scottish people. He died, as he had lived, holily; and, though never canonized, he enjoyed the local reputation of a Saint. His life was written by his cotemporary, S. Aelred.

Neither of S. Margaret's two daughters appear to have had a vocation to the holy religious state; or we may be sure their pious mother would have done all to foster it. Maud, the eldest, was married to Henry I., and so became Queen of England; Mary, to Eustace, Count of Bouillon, brother to Godfrey, King of Jerusalem. It was a happy thing for Scotland that Margaret's sons as well as daughters copied their mother's bright example on the throne.* Happily for herself, she escaped the dangers usually besetting parents—a weak over-fondness that makes it impossible to correct their children, or an indolent *laissez faire*, to the neglect of their responsible position.

The special maxims she instilled into her children's minds have been preserved to us. We cannot wonder, on reading them, that the holy queen was so abundantly blessed in her children; or at the abiding fruit they produced in the good soil they were sown in. Thus the maxims run:

1. That they should be willing to die a thousand times, rather than once to offend God grievously, which would deprive them of His grace, and expose them to endless misery.

2. That they should make a perfect oblation of their minds and hearts to the Blessed Trinity, the great object of Christian adoration; and have a special reverence to the Mother of our Redeemer, and a great confidence in her intercession, so powerful with God.

3. That they should love and protect the poor, as their own brethren.

* Appendix K.

4. That they should shun with horror all sins against chastity, more than they would avoid the infection of a mortal sickness.

5. That they should often ask and follow the advice of holy and pious men.

6. That they should be steadfast and inflexible in maintaining the Catholic faith, which had been so long happily held by their ancestors.

"She inspired them with an early indifference to the things of the world, with the greatest ardour for virtue, the purest love of God, fear of His judgments, and dread of sin. She chose for them the ablest preceptors and governors, persons eminently endued with the spirit of piety and religion.

"The zealous mother watched over the masters, examined the progress of her children, and often instructed them herself in all Christian duties. No sooner were the young princesses of an age capable of profiting by her example, than she made them her companions in her spiritual exercises and good works. She daily, by most fervent prayers and tears, conjured Almighty God to preserve their innocence, and fill their souls with the sentiments of those virtues which she endeavoured to instil into them. She extended her care and attention to her servants and domestics, and the sweetness and tender charity with which she seasoned her lessons, rendered her endeavours the more effectual. By her prudent zeal and example, concord, charity, modesty, religion, piety, and devotion, reigned in the whole Court, in which virtue was the only recommendation to the royal favour, and to want devotion was the most certain disgrace.

"The holy Queen remembered that, by the rank in which Providence had placed her, and by the authority which the King lodged in her, the whole kingdom was her family. She found it overrun with many abuses, and plunged in shameful ignorance of many essential duties of religion. It was her first care to procure holy and zealous pastors and preachers to be established in all parts of her dominions. She seconded their ministry with the weight of the royal authority, and that of all the magistrates, to abolish the criminal neglect of abstaining from servile works on Sun-

days and holy days, and of observing the fast of Lent, with many other abuses; and had the comfort to see, by her zealous endeavours, the strict observance of Lent restored, and the devout celebration of Sundays and festivals enforced: the people consecrating those days to God, both by assisting at the whole Church office and instructions, and by private devotions. Simony, usury, incestuous marriages, superstition, sacrileges, and other scandalous abuses, were also banished. Many neglected to receive the Holy Communion even at Easter, alleging a fear of approaching it unworthily. She showed this pretence to be only a cloak for sloth and impenitence, engaged sinners to cancel their crimes by worthy fruits of repentance, and contributed very much to revive the spirit of penance and frequent Communion. She laboured most successfully to polish and civilize the Scottish nation, to encourage among that people both the useful and polite arts, and to inspire them with a love of the sciences, and with the principles of all the social and moral virtues. All which she incited her husband to promote by many salutary laws and regulations.

"Charity to the poor was her darling virtue. Her own coffers could not suffice her liberality to them; and often she employed upon them part of what the King had reserved for his own use and necessities; which liberty he freely allowed her. Whenever she stirred out of her palace, she was surrounded by troops of widows, orphans, and other distressed persons, who flocked to her as to their common mother; nor did she ever send any one away without relief. Within doors, when she went into the hall of the palace, she found it filled with poor people: she washed their feet, and served them herself. She never sat down to table, without having first fed and waited on nine little orphans and twenty-four grown up poor. Often, especially in Lent and Advent, the royal couple called-in three hundred poor, served them at table on their knees; she, the women on one side, the King, the men on the other; giving them the same dishes that were served up at their own royal table. She frequently visited the hospitals, attending the sick with wonderful humility and tenderness. By her extensive alms, insolvent debtors were released, and decayed families restored; and foreign nations, especially the English, recovered their captives.

She was inquisitive and solicitous to ransom those especially who fell into the hands of harsh masters. She erected hospitals for poor strangers.

"The King most readily concurred with her in all manner of good works. 'He learned from her,' says Theodoric, 'often to watch the night in prayer. I could not sufficiently admire to see the fervour of this prince at prayer, and to discern so much compunction of heart, and such tears of devotion, in a secular man.' 'She excited the King,' says another ancient author, 'to the works of justice, mercy, almsdeeds, and other virtues; in all of which, by Divine grace, she brought him to be most ready to comply with her pious inclinations. For he, seeing that Christ dwelt in the heart of his Queen, was always willing to follow her counsels.'

"The small time which the Queen allowed herself for sleep, and the retrenchment of all amusements and pastimes, procured her many hours in the day for her devotions. In Lent and Advent, she always rose at midnight, and went to church to Matins. Returning home, she found six poor persons ready for her: she washed their feet, and gave to each a plentiful alms to begin the day. She then slept an hour or two: and after the rising, returned to the chapel, where she heard four or five Low Masses, and after these a High Mass. She had other hours in the day for prayer in her closet, where she was often found bathed in tears. 'As to her own eating, it was so sparing that it barely sufficed to maintain life, and by no means to gratify the appetite,' says Theodoric. 'She seemed rather only to taste, than to take her meat. In a word, her works were more wonderful than her miracles; though these were not wanting to her.' The same author, who was her confessor, writes: 'She was endowed with a wonderful spirit of compunction. When she would be speaking to me of the sweetness of everlasting life, her words were full of all grace. So great was her fervour and compunction on these occasions, that she seemed as if she would quite melt into tears; so that her devotion drew also from me tears of compunction. In the church, no one was more still in silence, no one more intent than she at prayer.' She often importuned her confessor to admonish her of whatever he perceived blameworthy in her words or actions; and was

displeased that he was, as she thought, remiss in this charitable office. Her humility made her desire reprehensions and correction, which the pride of others cannot brook. Every year, she kept two Lents of forty days each; the one at the usual time, the other before Christmas; both with incredible rigour. She recited every day the Short Offices of the Holy Trinity, of the Passion of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the Dead."

Surely, in the presence of such a portrait, we may say, with even more reason than the Queen of Saba exclaimed, when the order and magnificence of the court of Solomon opened upon her view: "Blessed are thy men, and blessed are thy servants who stand before thee always, and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, Whom thou hast pleased, and Who hath set thee upon the throne of Israel!"* Here is a wife, "tender and true," an affectionate careful mother, yet swaying, all the while, the destinies of a people, ruling a Court, reforming public abuses; and yet again, so absorbed in her lengthened devotions, by day and by night, that you might suppose her a devoted nun within some austere cloister. Prayer and work go hand and hand through her wonderful life; but the secret of its marvels is, that the one is always helping the other. Her influence is irresistible, for it is derived from union with God. She fulfils in some measure the Psalmist's description of the Saints, even on earth, before she goes to join them: "Thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honourable: their principality is exceedingly strengthened."† "Honourable," even now is she, in the lips of the most determined enemies of that faith which made her the powerful woman and gentle Queen. Strong was her "principality" over hearts and lives; till the Scotland of S. Margaret was supplanted by the Scotland of John Knox, and the sanctity of Scotland's sons and daughters gave way before the moral evils which heresy always brings in its train.

COLLECT.

O God, who hast made Blessed Queen Margaret wonderful for her eminent charity to the poor: grant that by her intercession and example, Thy charity may be ever increased in our hearts. Through our Lord.

* 3 Kings x. 8, 9. † Psalm cxxxviii. 17.

SAINT ANTONY OF PADUA,

THAUMATURGUS OF THE FRIARS MINOR.

JUNE 13.

A.D. 1231.

MIRACLES of unusual frequency and splendour, a preaching that seemed inspired, a great amount of popular affectionate devotion paid to him, as the restorer to us of things we had lost—these are some among the characteristics of S. Antony of Padua.

There must have been personal traits about him, however, to increase (what might be called) his popularity among Catholic peoples. Like the prophet Daniel, and S. John the beloved disciple, he is always represented as young. No artist has ever given us a bearded S. Antony of Padua. He died, in fact, at the age of thirty-six. We have the same kind of impression, when we think of him, as of S. Stephen, whose face was "as if it had been the face of an angel."* Then, he is more often, perhaps, addressed than Saints usually are, by an affectionate diminutive—invoked in Italy as *Sant' Antonino mio*, "my dear little Saint Antony." There are other Saints whom we should not think of so addressing. They had their own characteristics of sanctity. "Let every spirit praise the Lord;" let every diverse flower of his Spiritual Paradise look up to Him, and exhale its fragrance towards Himself, the central universal Sun. But you do not confuse them one with the other; you do not cease to glorify God for the variety as well as the beauty of form, the tints, the perfume, among that ocean of flowers.

* Acts vi. 15.

Who has invoked this favourite Saint for help to recover some lost article—book, rosary, bunch of keys—and has not perchance suddenly lit upon it, at an unlooked-for moment, or in a place hitherto unsearched, perhaps even searched before? Not always; because a wonder that becomes habitual ceases to be a wonder at all; profane people would take it as a matter of course, just as they take the sunrise, or expect service from a hireling. They would come to look on receiving their lost things again as a kind of right, and a grievance to have them withheld; as the Neapolitans are said to put themselves into a passion with S. Januarius, and to upbraid him in irreverent terms of reproach, if the liquefying is delayed.

But a proof that these especial acts of patronage are a kind of prerogative of S. Antony, is furnished by the hymn so often sung before his image, which in our tongue* may appear thus, though to no great advantage:

"Ye who wonders seek, attend!
Death and miseries quit the field,
Demons to his power must yield—
Sickness own his healing:
He from danger can defend,
Lepers cleanse, *lost goods restore*,
Bid wild ocean keep the shore,
Hidden things revealing.
Old and young his powers befriend;
Paduans, all—such grace extol:
Dear Saint, shield us, life and soul,
Here before thee kneeling!"

If we now ask, as one reverently may, what there was about S. Antony which has thus made him, as it were, the patron of lost property, the answer surely is, his own great spirit of self-concealment. He did all he lawfully could, to hide his great gifts; and that, from an ardent desire to resemble our Lord in His hidden life.

Gifts of the intellect and the soul are to be cherished in secret, with thankfulness and humility; nursed, like pearls within the shell, down in the depths. To bring intellectual qualities to the light, and display them, as a trader his wares, is to run the danger of making them into idols. And so, to manifest spiritual favours is generally the way to

* The original is: *Si quæris miracula*, &c.

deteriorate and diminish, if not to lose them. Such gifts from heaven are to be kept as secret as the Giver permits. When King Ezechias had shown the envoys from Babylon the "storehouse of his aromatical spices, and of the silver and of the gold, and of the sweet odours and of the precious ointment,"* the prophet was sent to declare to him, that they would all, one day, be carried away as spoils, to the city whence those strangers had come. *Sacramentum regis abscondere, bonum est;* "it is good to hide the secret of a king."†

No fear of such a hidden soul not contributing, in the long run, a full quota to the sum total of edification our neighbour has a right to expect. Nay, one of the most striking things that happens to us, (whenever it does), is to stumble unawares upon some instance of goodness in a person who is doing his utmost to conceal it. *Secretum meum mihi, secretum meum mihi.*‡ It is so dead against the world's spirit of self-exhibition and self-assertion. There you have a man who is living by faith, as so few of us do. He does not act "to be seen by men, but by his Father who seeth in secret." He is the edifying man; and he teaches us to be heartily ashamed of ourselves.

In this spirit, Antony, who had been building up, secretly and silently, for years, a fabric of devotion and learning, was all the while hiding the fair edifice with as much jealous care as he had built it with diligence and toil. To show this, we will plunge into the very midst of the story.

In 1221, Antony, having left§ the regular canons of S. Augustine, among whom he had begun his religious life, had embraced the new and poor Order of S. Francis of Assisi. This was at Coimbra, for the Saint was a Portuguese by birth: and of noble birth too, though that is beside the point.

"After some time spent in solitude, prayer, and penitential austerities, burning with a desire of martyrdom, he

* Is. xxxix. 2. † Tobias xii. 7. ‡ Is. xxiv. 16.

§ The impulse that moved him to seek the frock of a Friar Minor, was the arrival in Portugal of the relics of five friars of that Order, who had been martyred in Morocco. He hoped to be sent among the Mahometans, and to gain a crown like theirs.

obtained leave to go into Africa, to preach the Gospel to the Moors. He was scarce arrived there, when God, satisfied with the sacrifice of his heart, visited him with a severe fit of illness, which obliged him to return to Portugal, for the re-establishment of his health. But by contrary winds, the vessel on which he was embarked was driven to Sicily, and touched at Messina; where he was informed that S. Francis was then holding a General Chapter at Assisium. Sick and weak as he was, the desire of seeing the holy founder of his Order carried him to Assisium. When he had seen S. Francis, he desired to cultivate the happiness which he enjoyed in the company of the Saint; and in order to stay near his person, offered himself to the provincials and guardians* of Italy. S. Francis approved his inclination to renounce his friends and country; but not one of the superiors there assembled would be troubled with him; so unpromising and sickly was his aspect. For he took care to conceal his learning and talents, and presented himself only to serve in the kitchen. At last, a guardian in the province of Romagna, named Gratiani, took pity on him, and sent him to the hermitage of Mount Paul, a little solitary convent near Bologna.

"Antony thought of nothing but of burying himself here in obscurity, unknown to the world; joining the sweets of heavenly contemplation with the austerities of a penitential life, and the humiliations of such a state. He never let fall one word that might show his learning, much less anything of the sublime communication of his soul with God; but listened to everybody, and only spoke when obliged: till an accident made him known to the world. An assembly of the neighbouring Dominican and Franciscan Friars was held at Forli, in which the Dominicans, as strangers, were desired to make an exhortation to the company. They all excused themselves; everyone saying that he was not prepared. Then Antony's guardian ordered him to speak, and to say whatever the Holy Ghost would put in his mouth. The Saint begged to be excused, alleging that he had been only used to wash the dishes in the kitchen, and to sweep the house. But the

* Guardian or warden, the term for a local superior in the Franciscan Order.

superior insisting on his compliance, he spoke with such eloquence, erudition, and unction as astonished the whole company. He was at that time about twenty-six years old."

His gifts in announcing the word of God were, indeed, extraordinary; and, if not always absolutely supernatural, were often divided from it by an imperceptible line. That great miracles often attended his preaching, is certain. Once, a devout woman who was under his direction (and to be guided by Antony was a pledge of seeking to be perfect) was very desirous to hear his sermon. Not from mere curiosity, we may be sure, like those modern Athenians, who are continually running about to hear something new, or somebody new. Not in a spirit of carping and criticism, like so many who do themselves the cruel injustice of letting the good seed, that should have sunk from their ears into their hearts, be snatched away by volatile impertinences and watchful demons. But she desired to animate her soul, and stir it up to more perfect service of God, by those "words of the wise, that are as goads." Her husband entertained no such supernatural view. He spoke to her, like Pharao, who said to God's people: "You are idle, and therefore you say: 'Let us go, and sacrifice to the Lord.'" His heart was hardened, and he would not let her go. She went up, therefore, into her room, like the maiden Thecla in Iconium, who with open window listened to S. Paul. She knelt, doubtless, and earnestly prayed not to be thus deprived of the word of life. As she prayed, there came to her through the still air, first, a text of the Sacred Scripture, calmly, solemnly announced by the well-known voice of the man of God. Then the voice began to explain it, to throw light upon it, to show its connexion with other inspired words and with the Church's teaching, to drive its lesson powerfully home into the hearts and consciences of his hearers. Each utterance, and each intonation, fell distinctly upon the ear of the wondering woman. It was Antony himself! But how Antony? He was preaching at a distance—at such a distance that no human voice could have travelled all that way, unless winged by a miracle. Nevertheless, the miracle was needed by a poor soul in "famine of hearing the word of the Lord." For it was vouchsafed by Him who had "compassion on the multi-

tude" fainting in the wilderness, and who fed them by an exertion of His Omnipotence.

The moral effects of S. Antony's preaching were no less astonishing than the miraculous. As we read the short and simple notes of his sermons that have come down to us, it is difficult to imagine, even among the more excitable children of the south, what the sermons themselves are recorded to have wrought upon his hearers. Beautiful they are, transparent and full of unction, saturated with Scripture, like the writings and sermons of all those preachers who lived in a day, when, as some of our friends would tell us, the Bible was a book almost unknown. They form most edifying spiritual reading: that need hardly be said. But, as Æschines exclaimed of his greater rival, Demosthenes, when an oration of his, read after his death, called forth bursts of applause: "What, if you could have *heard* him?" They who heard Antony were transported beyond themselves. Strong men shook under his terrible denunciations of the Divine judgments. Equally great was he, in proclaiming the overflowing abundance of the Divine mercies to the penitent. His frequent miracles, also, much enhanced the reputation of his eminent sanctity wherever he came, and increased the effect of his words.

The crowds were everywhere so great at his sermons that he was often obliged to preach in market-places or fields. He is said to have preached to thirty thousand at one time. Through cities, towns, and villages he went, with unwearied zeal; preaching in France, Spain, Italy. One day, in France, when he was going to begin his sermon to a very numerous assembly in the fields, the sky was suddenly overcast with heavy clouds, and violent claps of thunder presaged a storm. "The people began to disperse, and run to the neighbouring city. But the Saint encouraged them to stay; and by his prayers obtained that the audience, as if they had been covered with an invisible canopy, felt nothing of the dreadful shower of rain and hail, whilst the neighbouring fields and highways were covered with a deluge."

Another miracle of S. Antony's, and connected with his sermons, was his surrounding himself with an audience of fishes.

He had been preaching to the inhabitants of a certain town, who greatly needed the reform he urged upon them. They turned a deaf ear to his exhortations. Then, with the true spirit of S. Francis, who was friends with all the creatures in the lower spheres of animated nature, S. Antony went to the sea-shore, and with a loud voice commanded the fishes to hear his words, that spoke of their Creator. Artists have striven to do justice to the scene; Antony in his worn gray frock, with rope for girdle; his cowl thrown back, his expressive face and energy, uttering the words of power; and all along the shore the heads of innumerable fishes, great and small, emerging above the surface, fixing their strange fishy eyes on the preacher.

The narrative of this great wonder has been much derided by such persons as think miraculous powers ceased in the Church with the last verse of the Acts of the Apostles. It is, at least, very edifying to us, who believe that the Lord's arm is not shortened in succeeding times, any more than in the days recorded in the Bible. As long as there is well-meaning unbelief to be convinced, or believing carelessness to be awakened, or down-hearted Christians to be encouraged, so long, by Divine mercy, will miracles be wrought; in His own good time, way, and degree. As it is not for us "to know the times or moments"* when a prophecy will be accomplished, so it is not for us to stumble at the details of a recorded miracle, because, in our self-sufficiency, we might have anticipated, or preferred, other details instead. If the Lord opened the mouth † of an ass to rebuke the wicked Balaam, why should not a mule, at S. Antony's command, go down on its knees before the Blessed Sacrament, that a heretic may be converted and saved? If the ravens‡ brought to Elias his morning and evening repast, bread and flesh, all the time that he remained by the torrent of Carith, why should not the fishes, at least once in their lives, come up in the attitude of attentive listeners to a sermon? A mind cast in the mould of Voltaire would equally sneer at both narratives. The miracles in the great S. Antony's life are not indeed to be received by divine faith, as the Scripture miracles are. Yet it more accords with the "analogy of faith" to believe that

* Acts i. 7. † Numb. xxii. 21, &c. ‡ 3 Kings xvii. 4—6.

an ever-present Omnipotence should manifest Himself through the veil, on later occasions, as on earlier, when His having done so comes to us on testimony apparently sound. There is, at least, no *a priori* presumption on the other side!

One thing is certain: we faithless human beings are rebuked, not as by miracle, but in the way of daily, hourly preaching, by the conduct of animated nature beneath us. A prophet is commissioned from heaven to set the ox and the ass, creatures that in a dumb yet intelligent way recognise the hand that feeds them, as models in this particular to Israel, that had forgotten the Lord. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood." * Again: "The kite in the air hath known her time: the turtle, and the swallow, and the stork have observed the time of their coming: but My people have not known the judgment of the Lord." †

This, in the order of nature only. By what wonderful instincts the creatures around us move and act, build and provide, seek their prey, or defend their lives, subordinate themselves to the general good of the communities in which they bear their part! How astonishing is their kindness and mutual assistance, their diligence, apparent forethought, and simplicity of purpose, and husbanding of time, and perseverance under discouragement! "Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom; which, although she hath no guide, nor master, nor captain, provideth her meat for herself in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." ‡ Go to an aquarium, O man of self-will, and see some of those very fishes that formed S. Antony's audience. How perfectly they fulfil the end of their creation! Whether floating motionless, dreamily, in the pure element God has given them, or darting like shafts of silver through its liquid range, or turning, flashing, gambolling, with an all-unconscious beauty and ease, you may well smite your breast, as you stand before them, and say: "If I did but my part in creation, as they do theirs, from moment to moment of my existence here, I should be a good half-way towards a fully formed sanctity!"

Then, as man's wavering views of truth lead him per-

* Is. i. 3. † Jer. viii. 7. ‡ Prov. vi. 6—8.

petually from one to the opposite extreme, we have, on the other hand, our zoophilists, our ichthyophilists, our anything-but-philanthropists, who would so elevate the brute nature as to rank it almost with the human. Cruelty to animals—the sign of a bad heart, indeed—is exaggerated in their theory, till it equals some act of brutal savagery to a fellow-creature, to an immortal soul. S. Antony, were he preaching to-day, would raise his energetic protest against such maudlin tenderness to "our dumb friends," as contains a subtle element of the materialist and infidel taint of our latter times. Magistrates appear to think beating and kicking a horse a greater offence than doing the same to wife and child. Elderly ladies, choosing the worse alternative of Pope's line,

"Die, and endow a college—or a cat:"

found colleges and houses of refuge for cats, while the poor, who own immortal souls, and hardly can keep those treasures within the casket made to contain them during the allotted span, are perishing at their doors. No doubt, Dives had his favourite lap-dog, and it got the morsels that would have kept Lazarus in life.

To return to our great preacher among the Friars Minor. If we give a glance into S. Antony's note-book, we shall see how carefully he put down the heads of his discourses. He trusted neither to his great natural eloquence, nor to what is sometimes called "the inspiration of the moment." He did not rely, as some young preachers do, on a promise of our Lord made to His martyrs,* that the Holy Ghost should speak in them, without premeditation on their part, when brought before their persecutors. It is true that silence, study, and prayer had stored Antony's mind with theology, as well as his heart with spiritual perception. But equally true was it, in his case, as in that of every great servant of God: "He that feareth the Lord, neglects nothing."† So, when he was preparing to preach, he carefully mapped out his subject. Precise, and even technical, are these outlines. If, on reading them, we try to imagine how they could have swayed the minds and wills of his audience so powerfully, we must set them on fire with the vehement ardour of the

* S. Mark xiii. 11. † Eccles. vii. 19.

Saint's personal charity to God and men, which expanded, rarified them, winged them, made them fly like burning arrows, or brands from a blessed conflagration, right into the hearts and consciences of his hearers.

Take, for example, a part of his sermon for the Second Sunday in Lent, on the Transfiguration of our Lord. Observe how familiar he is with the written word of God; how he introduces Scripture at every turn; how, in his affectionate familiarity with the sacred writings, he finds rich hidden meanings in the text—to a fanciful extent, the cold-hearted might say—but with a cheering, comforting light to the pilgrim-steps of those who love to gaze, as they journey on, at the beautiful and "many-hued wisdom of God."* Every sentence of the Scripture was, to that loving Saint, the breathing of the Holy Ghost, as through a marvellous instrument of many chords, diverse and yet all harmonious, and suggesting more than it expressed. There was the literal sense, and the moral, and the mystical; the first-sight meaning, and the meanings of hidden wisdom, into which it was Antony's reverent joy to look, as men bend down to gaze into some well, profound and pure, marvelling to see at what depths they can discern the shining pebble, or the tresses of waving moss. Shallow interpreters, on the other hand, must they be, who misuse and manipulate the written word by their own poor judgments, measuring it by their warped inch-rule, not by the golden reed of the Sanctuary.

Hear, then, S. Antony, the "Ark of the Covenant,"† discoursing of his Lord's glory on Tabor. The sentences are so terse, that we must insert a word here and there, to make them even intelligible.

'"He was transfigured before them.'" Of this transfiguration we read in the Apocalypse: 'I saw another mighty Angel come down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was on his head.'‡ In the word 'angel,' is seen the plenitude of purity; in the word 'other,' (that is, diverse from those evil angels whom S. John had seen

* Eph. iii. 10 (Gr.).

† So he was called by Pope Gregory IX. who heard him with great admiration in Rome, in 1227.

‡ Apoc. x. 1.

before,*) the strength of righteousness; in 'mighty,' the prevalence of power; in his 'coming down,' the greatness of clemency. This descent, according to S. Augustine, is no other thing than His new work upon earth; for it is by working that He manifests Himself. And, if it be objected, that the Evangelist does not say in this place that He came down, but that the disciples went up the mountain with Him, the answer is: The way of ascension and of descent is the same; nay, that going up and down are [here] identical. The Saviour, therefore, in the operations of His grace, is said to come down, considered in Himself; but in those to whom He reveals Himself, He is said to go up, inasmuch as by such ascension *they* ascend to God. An instance of this is seen in the human nature which He assumed, in which His descent is our ascension.

"'Clothed with a cloud,'" that is, clad in His most pure flesh; for clouds are so named,† because they veil the clear brightness of the sun's body. See Ezechiel: 'I will cover the sun with a cloud.'‡ 'And a rainbow on his head;' that is, I saw him crowned with the four gifts. These are stated by theologians as *claritas*, radiance, or splendour, *agilitas*, the faculty of passing without effort from sphere to sphere of the empyrean heavens; *subtilitas*, the spirituality of the glorified body, impeded by no obstruction from external objects; and *impassibilitas*, or absence of all possibility of suffering in a glorified body; signified by the four colours of the rainbow. For in the rainbow are four colours, corresponding with the four elements; and they are types of those four gifts; for man is composed of the four elements, and from each he will derive one of the gifts, if, that is, the elements exist in him in their due and perfect proportion. For at present, fire is obscured by the admixture of other things; but then [in the future transfiguration of the glorified body] it will be changed into clarity.§ Air is weighted by the deteriorating admixture of heavier substances; but, then, it will be changed into agility. Water is thickened by the admixture of turbid elements; but, then, it will be changed into subtility. Earth, too, which is now

* Apoc. c. ix. 14, 15. † *Nubes*, from *nubo*. ‡ Ezech. xxxii. 7.
§ After the likeness of our Lord's own Sacred Body. See S. Matt. xvii. 2; S. Mark ix. 2; S. Matt. xiii. 43; Phil. iii. 21.

liable to many fissures, will be changed into impassibility. So that by the rainbow, in which are four colours, corresponding to the four elements, we may understand the beauty of these four gifts."

These are doubtless mere notes; they indicate rather than express what S. Antony delivered. Wonderfully must these jottings have been expanded in the utterance, and by the subduing power of the presence of a manifest Saint. It is not said that such mystical applications of Scripture would come home equally to every cast of mind. We live in a quick, impatient age;—an age positive, over-active, undervaluing every process of thought that ends in no immediate, visible, tangible result. Antony preached to men who breathed a calmer atmosphere.

Yet sin is always sin: and it is to the children of the nineteenth century, as to the first, that our Lord declares: "Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish."* As the Franciscan wonder-worker was a chosen instrument for bringing crowds to the sacrament of penance, and thus to conversion of heart, these brief notes must have formed the basis for a most powerful exposition of the eternal truths.

COLLECT.

May the votive celebration of blessed Antony, Thy confessor, rejoice Thy Church, O Lord: that it may ever be defended by spiritual aids, and merit to enjoy eternal happiness. Through our Lord.

* S. Luke xiii. 5.

SAINT IRENÆUS.

BISHOP AND MARTYR.

JUNE 28,

A.D. 202, OR 208.

If any Nathanael of modern days, some man of good will but small reading, and perhaps less observation, imagines what is called "Popery" to be an invention of later times, he would be disabused by dipping into the writings of S. Irenæus. There he would find Popery, that is, the teaching authority of the Holy See, stated forcibly enough to convince any "Israelite without guile," that Popery is primitive Christianity. There he would find, too, our ever-blessed Lady and Mother, the second Eve, the Woman of Genesis and the Apocalypse,* occupying her true place in the writings of this early Christian and Saint; a disciple, (mark it), only at one remove, from that Beloved Disciple who, on Good Friday, "took her to his own."†

If Popery does not mean the Pope, and if the charge of Mariolatry is not among the foremost which self-sufficient ignorant people bring against us, then where shall we look for their special distinguishing charges against "the Truth as it is in Jesus?"‡

The words of this great primitive Saint, on the former point, the authority of Rome, have been often quoted, as indeed they deserve. Can we have an excellent thing too often? The value of what he writes is not derived only from his being an ancient and holy writer, but from his having learnt his religion from S. John's own disciple, S.

* Gen. iii. 15; Apoc. xii. 1. † S. John xix. 27.
‡ Eph. iv. 21.

Polycarp. Popery, then—to use the word as a recognised term, not as a correct one in those who use it—Popery must have been, indeed, a very early introduction into the Church's teaching.* The thin end of the wedge must have been driven in, either between S. John and S. Polycarp, or between S. Polycarp and S. Irenæus. Polycarp must have misunderstood the Apostle, or have been misunderstood by his own disciple. S. Irenæus cannot be misunderstood; for his words are unmistakable.

He is writing against heresies, and showing how they are to be met. Not by interminable arguments, but by the clear, plain decision of some authority to whom God has given the mission to decide. A final appeal is indispensable in matters of faith, of supernatural truth; far more than in any question of politics, legislature, or the executive power. For heresy, by its very name, is the "choosing," or "taking up" of an opinion on religion; and if, by a misguided choice, a man selects a false opinion, it is far worse than taking a serpent into his bosom. The serpent may sting him to a temporal death; but to become a heretic is to "depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error, and doctrines of demons;"† to join with sects of perdition, and incur swift destruction.‡

How, then, to escape this great and irreparable evil? How to discern "the truth as it is in Jesus," amid the wrangle and clash of tongues? While "every one hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation,"§ how to hear the calm authoritative voice of God revealing His "everlasting Gospel?"

It is a question of no less moment to-day, than in the time of S. Irenæus. Our modern press is bursting out with a deluge of man's opinions about all things in heaven above, and on the earth beneath, and in the waters—and fires—under the earth. Popular theology, smart leading-articles, confident assertions, plausible lecturings, ingenious theories, audacious unbelief, "cunningly devised fables," "the operation of error to believe falsehood"—these are the conditions of our probation for life eternal. The flood-gates are open: must we be swept away?

* Appendix L.

† 1 Tim. iv. 1. ‡ 2 S. Peter ii. 1. § 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

No. Our Lord has provided. "Simon, . . *thou*, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." "Thou art Cephas, and on this cephas I will build My Church. . . To thee will I give the keys." "Feed My sheep."

Now, to come straight from a page of Scripture to a page of patristic testimony. S. Irenæus speaks of "the greatest, and most ancient, and universally known Church, founded and constituted at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul;" and goes on to declare: "With this Church, on account of her more powerful headship (principality), every church, that is, the faithful everywhere dispersed, must be in communion, or agree."* Further, he asserts its perpetual and faithful custody of the Faith: "In which [Church] always, by those who are on every side, has been preserved that tradition which is from the Apostles."†

We are not engaged in polemics, except at a round trot, as we go by: so we will not delay upon this conclusive testimony. Would that all who are of the spirit of Nathanael would weigh it! Let us turn to another passage, in which S. Irenæus proves himself an accurate and devout theologian for "the glories of Mary."

The contrast between the first and the second Eve has always been a favourite thought with spiritual writers. Look into Paradise; there you have the poor guilty crouching woman, "the mother of all the living" in the natural life. She has brought upon all those living, condemnation and death by her sin. This is the first Eve. But a ray of hope descends upon her, even from the angry heavens: for a promise comes down; promise of a second Mother, an all-perfect Woman, the Eve and the Mother of all who spiritually live. Condemnation by an Eve, and restoration by an Eve; this is no modern discovery, or mediæval symbolism. It does not begin with S. Bernard, or S. Alphonsus Liguori. S. Irenæus is precentor in the chant of praise to Mary.

"When," he says, "the Lord manifested Himself, and 'came unto His own,' and that [mortal] state of 'His own' upbore Him, which was by Himself upborne; when He compensated the disobedience which had been by the wood

* Necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam (S. Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3, ed. Massuet).

† S. Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3, n. 2.

[of the forbidden tree], through [His own] obedience which was by the wood [of His Cross], and undid [the consequences of] that leading astray whereby the virgin Eve, already espoused to a husband, in evil [hour] was enticed—then the Virgin Mary, espoused to a husband, had the good tidings brought to her in truth, and in a blessed [hour], by an angel. For even as the first was led astray by the words of a [fallen] angel, to flee from God, and transgress His command, so the latter had the good tidings brought to her by a [good] angel, to bear her God, and to obey His word. While the one disobeyed God, yet the other was induced to obey Him; so that the Virgin Mary became the advocate of the virgin Eve. And whereas the human race was bound unto death by a virgin, so by a Virgin it is saved;* the scales being equally poised, virginal disobedience by [or, weighed against] virginal obedience."†

Here, then, is the teaching of Polycarp reproduced—Polycarp, who learned it from the Beloved disciple to whom the Crucified had said: "Behold thy Mother!"

Let us now look in upon young Irenæus, and that same aged Polycarp; the teacher and his docile, willing hearer.

A beautiful heart-stirring sight it was; this young eager Syrian boy of twelve years old, sitting at the feet of the white-haired bishop of Smyrna, "hearing him and asking him questions." Polycarp himself is a remarkable figure; comely with the venerableness of a long life spent in the Lord's service. His was the old age that is "a crown of dignity, when it is found in the ways of justice."‡ Then, again, his life is a bridge—or one of them, for they are several and precious—connecting the Gospel with the history and documents of the early Church. He hands on the tradition of truth, the "good deposit" of faith, committed by each of the Apostles to his disciples; by S. Paul to Timothy and Titus, by S. John to Ignatius, and from him to Polycarp. Theorists of later days would build up a wall across that bridge, and "daub it with dirt without straw."§

* Others read, *released*. The question is between *salvatur*, the general reading, and *solvitur*. The meaning is essentially the same. Our Lady is the instrument of His coming, by Whom the world is freed and saved.

† S. Iren. adv. Hær. lib. v. c. 19.

‡ Prov. xvi. 31. § Ezech. xiii. 10.

They seek to persuade us, that all which lies on one side of their untempered wall is safe, all on the other side, unsafe. According to them, whatever is found in an inspired Book which they interpret according to their very uninspired fancies, is (as indeed it is) the word of the Holy Ghost; while all that belongs to the tradition of the Church inhabited by that same Paraclete, must needs be the private spirit of fallible man. Cold-hearted, incredulous theory! "The Hand of the Lord is not shortened." But now, back to S. Polycarp teaching his young disciple, and Irenæus receiving the word of life from his aged lips.

Where shall we imagine those blessed instructions to have been given? Blessed on both sides; for Christian teaching, like every other act of mercy, "blesses him that gives, and him that takes." Perhaps it is in the holy bishop's house in Smyrna; where Polycarp, not so long after, saw the vision, or dreamed the dream, of his pillow being on fire, and thus knew his martyrdom was to be by the flame, not by the sword. Or perhaps they met in the neighbourhood of the amphitheatre that was to be the scene of his triumph, and of the miracle attending it.* Or they may have wandered forth to the harbour of Smyrna, in the calm eventide, along a fragrant road embowered with citrons and roses; their talk partly interrupted by the clash of cymbals and beat of drums in the hands of the priests of Cybele, and the harsh discordant cries that rose amid the idol-sacrifice. With what deep pity did they hear, without listening to them, the rites of those misguided idolators! How did they yearn to impart to them the life-giving truths on which their own souls were feeding!

Then, mingled with the verities of the everlasting Gospel, were Polycarp's personal recollections, and what we should call anecdotes, of the great Apostle. How John had looked, with what voice he spoke, how his eagle glance frequently sought the Heaven where he had built high the eyrie of his soul, above the stars, above myriads of the Angels, so near to *His* throne on whose Breast he had leaned in the hour of Paschal sorrow. Thus and thus did he utter his words of familiar teaching, that were but the echo, or the expansion, of those sublime utterances dictated to him by the

* *Afternoons with the Saints*, pp. 124, 130—131.

Holy Ghost: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us."

With even such a look of heavenly love did "John the Theologus"* discourse of that supernal charity, the test and touch-stone of each man's real condition. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." "He that loveth not, abideth in death." "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?" "Behold, what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God!"†

Yet with what apostolic authority, with how impressive though calm a severity, did the Apostle of love denounce seceders and heretics, who could not love, because they would not believe; who affected to be saved by a vague pietism that ignored, or made light of, the real God of truth! S. John's voice must have deepened, and his look expressed apostolic zeal no less than love, while he proclaimed that false teachers are to be avoided, as the very poisoners of souls:

"He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber." "He who saith that he knoweth Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." "Now there are become many Antichrists. . They went out from us, but they were not of us. . These things have I written to you, concerning them that seduce you." "Whosoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. . If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you. For he that saith to him, God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works."‡

"Yes," Polycarp might have added; "and, as I thus learned from my master in Christ, so did I. For once, in

* S. John is called "Theologus," or "the Divine," (he who speaks of God, and the things of God), because the Divinity of our Blessed Lord is brought out so prominently in his Gospel, from the very first words of it, throughout.

† 1 S. John iv. 20; iii. 1.

‡ S. John x. 1; 1 S. John ii. 4, 18, 19, 26; 2 S. John 9, 10, 11.

Rome,* I met the heretic Marcion in the streets—him who blasphemed the Unity of our One Lord—and passed him by. Not that I did not yearn for his conversion; for I would have shed my blood to procure it. But I could not say, God speed you, to God's enemy. He stayed me, however, and said: 'Do you not know me, Polycarp?' 'Yes,' I answered: 'I know you to be the first-born of Satan'—and so left him."

The boy Irenæus would have revolved this in his mind. Was it consistent, (perhaps the thought occurred to him), with the Divine precept: "I say to you, love your enemies"? Or with the apostolic injunction—if he chanced to have lit on a manuscript scroll of S. Paul's writing to Timothy, which enjoins: "The servant of the Lord must not wrangle; but be mild towards all men, apt to teach, patient; with modesty admonishing them that resist the truth; if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth, and they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are led captives at his will."† Is such a severe rebuke consistent with all this?

These two things, Irenæus, are quite in harmony. A bishop is bound to rebuke, both the erring among his flock, and those whose life-destroying doctrines prove them to be ravening wolves. The blind who follow the blind may be dealt with more gently; but the blind who lead the blind often need a ruder couching, to tear away the scales from their eyes. They have been so accustomed to teach, and to lead, to walk in long clothing, to be saluted as "Rabbi," that it demands a more abundant grace from above, and sometimes a more energetic treatment at the hands of man, to show them their perilous delusion. Not that individuals are often called to execute this office of stern reprover; but S. Polycarp was no ordinary individual. He was a prelate; set as a watchman of Israel on the tower, with a duty and a commission to warn, never so loudly. He was, moreover, a great servant of God, and must be supposed to have received a special light to follow the example of his great master, S. John, and of the Divine Master of all. What can be more severe than *His* reproof of hypocrisy and self-delusion?

* See S. Jerome, *Catal. Vir. Illustr.* c. 17. † 1 Tim. ii. 24—26.

"Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!—Ye serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?"*

We have here imagined the converse between that aged Saint, and the boy he was training to Apostolic sanctity, and then to martyrdom. But we are not left to imagination; S. Irenæus himself has given us some account of it. Later in life, when he had become bishop of Lyons, he wrote an epistle to one Florinus, of which a precious fragment remains. Florinus and Valentinus, who both afterwards fell into heresy, had been his fellow-disciples at the feet of S. Polycarp. Valentinus became leader of a pernicious sect of Gnostics; Florinus, on his part, dared to affirm, on Gnostic principles, that God is the author of sin. He was thereupon deposed from the priesthood. Eusebius gives us the following passage from S. Irenæus' letter to this unhappy man:

"These doctrines, Florinus, (to speak gently, and to spare thee), are not those of sound opinion; they are out of harmony with the Church, and cast their disciples into the extreme of impiety; not even heretics outside the Church have ever ventured to utter them; the priests who were before us, who consorted with the Apostles themselves, have not delivered such to thee. For I saw thee, when I was still a boy with Polycarp, in Lower Asia, while thou didst occupy a brilliant position at the Emperor's court, and wert aiming at his favour. What occurred at that time, I remember better than more recent events; for our boyish impressions grow with the mind's growth, and become one with it: so that I could describe the very spot where the blessed Polycarp sat and discoursed; how he moved out and in, from place to place; his rule of life and personal appearance,† the discourses he made to the people, and how he related his converse with John and with others who had seen the Lord: how he recorded their words, and what he had heard from them concerning the Lord, His miracles and His teaching: how Polycarp had received from those eye-witnesses, details of the life of the Word, and narrated everything in accordance with the Scriptures. All this, by

* S. Matt. xxiii. *passim*.

† On the venerable comeliness of S. Polycarp, see the encyclical letter of the church of Smyrna, given in *Afternoons*, pp. 125, 128.

the mercy of God that was upon me, I diligently hearkened to, laying it up for remembrance, not on paper, but in my heart; and by God's grace I ever ruminate upon it in detail. And I can testify before God, that if that blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard anything like [thy doctrines], he would have cried out and stopped his ears, and would have said, as he was wont to do: 'O good God,* to what times hast Thou reserved me, that I should endure this!' and he would have fled from the place where he was sitting or standing when he heard such words. This may be proved, moreover, by the epistles which he sent, both to the neighbouring Churches, to confirm them, and to certain brethren, to admonish and exhort them."†

While we are engaged upon these fragments of the Apostolic Father, let us pick up another crumb from the fulness of his table. He gives us, in few words, a principle which, if we would only retain it in our hearts, would have power to transform us into men both of contemplation and Christian energy.

"Every one," says the Saint, "is either empty, or full. For if he have not the Spirit of God, he hath not the knowledge of the Creator, he receives not Jesus Christ the Life, he knows not the Father who is in Heaven: if he lives not according to the heavenly law, he practises neither temperance nor righteousness—such an one is empty. But if he hath received and retained God, who saith: "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God":—such an one is not empty, but full."‡

We have been putting his later writings before his earlier acts, in a sort of topsy-turvy way. Let us now go back, and figure to ourselves S. Irenæus, no longer a boy learning at the feet of Polycarp, but a young man, ripe for the priesthood, with a mission from his great teacher to save souls in what, to-day, is France. Polycarp, perhaps with a prophetic knowledge of the work his disciple will accomplish in Gaul,

* Words which, on the lips of S. Polycarp, were a pious ejaculation; though, from mere force of habit, they are so often on the lips of others as an exclamation of surprise, impatience, or to add zest to conversation; and thus become an irreverent use of the Divine Name.

† S. Iren. Fragm. p. 1227 ed. Migne.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 1243.

sends him thither,* very likely in company with some priest. They went from Smyrna, across the sea which S. Luke† calls "Adria," including the Greek archipelago and the lower Adriatic, till they reached the gulf between north-western Italy and Gaul. They landed at Massilia, as S. Lazarus and his sisters, and so many Eastern merchants, had done before them. They pushed their way up the Rhone, for more than a hundred miles, till they reached a promontory, or tongue of land, where the waters of the Rhone and the Saône unite, to rush down together to the southern coast. On this promontory, the Romans had built their city Lugdunum—a great emporium of merchandise then, as now. For it is Lyons, the second city in France; bearing much the same relation to Paris that Manchester does to London.

The bishop of Lugdunum at that time was the saintly Pothinus, soon to be a martyr. He discerned the merits of Irenæus, ordained him priest, and sent him to Rome, to Pope S. Eleutherius, to intreat him not to excommunicate the Orientals for their schismatic obstinacy in celebrating Easter on the wrong day.‡

By this journey to Rome, S. Irenæus unwittingly delayed his own martyrdom: for, during his absence, the sword of persecution was unsheathed against the Christians in Lyons. Many went, by the road of a painful death, to their eternal crown. He seems to have returned, however, in the midst of it; if some authors are right in supposing that the epistle written in the name of the sufferers to their friends in Asia and Phrygia,§ is by his hand. It gives a vivid and affecting narrative of the constancy of the martyrs, and is among the

* S. Gregory of Tours is the authority for this statement.

† Acts xxvii. 27.

‡ Eusebius *H. E.* lib. v. c. 4; S. Hieron. *Catal.* c. 29.

§ A considerable proportion of the faithful in the churches of Vienne and Lyons seem to have come from the East. "The great commerce between Marseilles and the ports of Lesser Asia, especially Smyrna, made the intercourse between those places very open. The faith of Christ was propagated in that part of Gaul in the times of the Apostles; and from thence soon reached Vienne and Lyons, this latter town being then, by the advantage of the Rhone, no less famous a mart than it is at this day. . Among the Greeks and Orientals, whom we find crowned with martyrdom, with others, at Lyons and Vienne, several doubtless had travelled into those parts with a view only to carry thither the light of the Gospel."

most valuable, as it is also one of the earliest, records of the Church in its painful cradle.

S. Pothinus, at more than ninety years of age, so weak and infirm that he could hardly breathe, was brought before the tribunal; then he was dragged about and ill-treated so unmercifully by the enraged populace, that he accomplished his martyrdom in prison, two days later. S. Irenæus was chosen bishop in his place.

In times like those, the episcopal purple was, almost of course, dyed in the heart's blood of the wearer. So it was to be, later, with the second bishop of Lyons, as with the first. But, before then, he will have some thirty years of active work. The persecution of Marcus Aurelius has swept over, and left him untouched. A later one, under Severus, will then strike him down, at the head of his flock. Meanwhile, he will gather in an abundance of merit, and of souls. "By his preaching, he in a short time converted almost that whole country to the faith, as S. Gregory of Tours testifies. Eusebius tells us, that he governed the churches of Gaul; but the faith was not planted in the more remote provinces from Marseilles and Lyons, before the following century."

Now comes the final act. A revolt in the Lyonese territory against the authority of Severus, in which the Christians had no share, brought the Emperor himself from Rome; and he amply justified his name by the retaliation he inflicted. The clamours of the pagans, too, against the disciples of our Lord, urged on his natural disposition. "Ado, in his Chronicle, says that S. Irenæus suffered martyrdom with an exceeding great multitude. An ancient epitaph in leonine* verses, inscribed on a curious mosaic pavement in the great church of S. Irenæus in Lyons, says, the martyrs who died with him amounted to the number of nineteen thousand. S. Gregory of Tours writes, that S. Irenæus had in a very short time converted to the faith almost the whole city of Lyons: and that with him were butchered almost all the Christians of that populous town; insomuch that the streets ran with streams of blood." It

* Verses of a kind much used by the mediæval writers, each of which contains a double rhyme: as

Hac sunt in fossa Bedæ Venerabilis ossa:
or, Prætereundo cave ne sileatur Ave.

must therefore have been a small minority of pagans still remaining in Lyons, who made the revolt, and brought on the martyrdoms. Such is the general history of public disturbances. A handful of desperadoes overawe the rest, whom they claim to represent. If good were only as active as evil, in this disorganized world!

It was reserved, however, for men boasting the Christian name to complete, by further acts of insane fury, what heathens had left undone in their day.

Quod non fecere barbari, fecere Barberini.

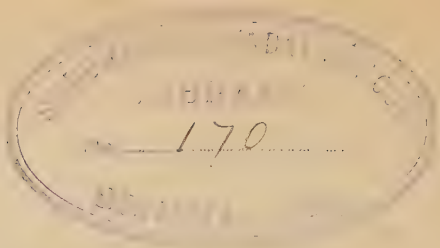
Thus it was.

"The precious remains of S. Irenæus were buried by his priest Zachary, between the bodies of the holy martyrs SS. Epipodius and Alexander. They were kept with honour in the subterraneous chapel in the church of S. John [at Lyons], till, in 1562, they were scattered by the Calvinists, and a great part thrown into the river. The head they kicked about in the streets, then cast it into a little brook; but it was found by a Catholic, and restored to S. John's church. The Greeks honour his memory on the twenty-third of August; the Latins on the twenty-eighth of June. The former say, he was beheaded."

COLLECT.

O God, who didst enable blessed Irenæus, Thy martyr and bishop, to cast out heresy by the truth of his teaching, and happily to confirm the Church's peace:* bestow upon Thy people, we beseech Thee, steadfastness in holy religion, and grant Thy peace in our times. Through our Lord.

* In allusion to his name, which means "the peaceful."



SAINT ULRIC,

BISHOP OF AUGSBURG.

JULY 4.

A.D. 973.

Ulric, or Oudalric, bishop of Augsburg in the tenth century, was a great prelate, and a great man. His sanctity was of the kind so rare, yet so needful to those who are called to important public functions, and who have to spend much of their time amid the throng, or with the high ones of this earth. It was the combination of a recollected soul with active energy, with administration, and a continual thought for others. According to the account left to us by the provost Gerhard, who wrote the Saint's life, he seems to have worked, journeyed, administered, as if he never meant to betake himself to prayer; and to have prayed, as if there was no such thing as exterior work to be done. But such has always been a part of the science of the Saints. By early rising, careful husbanding of moments, frequent ejaculations, they have known how to cultivate these two things together. Union with God, and active service, have both furthered them along the narrow way, like the right and left foot of a pilgrim, who nears, at every step, the goal he tends to.

Ulric was born in 890, in the quaint old city of which he afterwards became bishop. His father was Ubald, the count of Dillingen; his mother, named Dietpirch, of the ducal house of Suabia. These circumstances, in their degree, are worth noting. For when a man has been surrounded with luxuries and honours from his cradle, and yet keeps in mind, with S. Stanislaus, that he was born, not for

perishable things, but for the imperishable and eternal; when, thereupon, he resigns,—nay renounces—all for Christ, he stands forth, a notable monument of Divine grace. "*He* gives up much," it is true, "who gives up his all:" and though the much may be intrinsically little, it is a total resignation in him who leaves himself nothing. It is the widow casting her two mites into the treasury. Yet the renouncement of the good things of this life, when they were possessed in abundance, strikes the imagination still more forcibly. We see the king discrowning his head, that has grown grey beneath its glittering circlet, and the young noble disrobing himself of ermine and samite, to put on the coarse habit of a religious, and begin to learn obedience. We see the maiden of high birth casting away her precious jewels for the pearl of yet greater price, turning from some brilliant alliance set before her, that has touched heart more than mere fancy, to seek the heavenly espousals that invite her. And the once ambitious soldier, with fulness of life yet before him, with fresh honours in store, and the highest meed of his country's applause; what does he? He hangs up his victorious sword at the altar of the Prince of peace, and devotes himself to "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* These are signal triumphs of grace; not counting for more, perhaps, in the eternal balances, though more immediately arresting to our minds, than the widow's mites, or the boat and tackle of S. Peter and the sons of Zebedee.

S. Ulric appears to have been designed very early for the ecclesiastical state; we find him already a Canon, while yet a scholar in the celebrated Benedictine monastery of Saint-Gall.† Here, under the tuition of the monks Waninc

* Eph. vi. 17.

† Early in the seventh century, a monk from Iona, the great monastic training-ground of S. Columba, passed into the continent, in quest, perhaps of greater retirement, or urged by missionary zeal. His name was latinized into Gallus, perhaps by himself, as expressing what in his native speech would have designated a stranger—Gathail, or Gael. Building for his narrow abode a cell, some seven miles south-west of the lake of Constance, this "stranger" lived and died there. Fifty years after his decease, Pepin d'Heristal erected on the spot an abbey, which, between the eighth and tenth centuries, became one of the most celebrated schools of learning in Europe.

and Hartmann, he made rapid progress in philosophy and theology, and joined to his other acquirements the science of the Saints. To do honour to his parents, or chiefly, perhaps, to receive advantage from his clear voice and correct reading, the community would often appoint the boy-canon to be lector in their refectory. There were critical and fastidious ears all around, listening to him during the process; even as in later communities: but he used to come off with flying colours. "In the refectory," says Pertz,* "in presence of the Fathers, where one iota of a mistake was a grave offence, he was frequently the reader, and without fault."†

It must have been a striking scene, if we would picture it. The ample refectory, severely garnished in Benedictine fashion; small round-capped windows, high in the wall; the numerous monks and lay-brothers, seated silently, each in his place, in the black habit of S. Benedict, with heads closely shaven; the noiseless sandalled feet of the servers, as they glide hither and thither with the plain fare, careful not to interrupt or drown the reading. Nothing breaks the stillness except the silvery treble of the small Count von Dillingen, and grandson of Duke Burchard. He stands at a lectern in the midst of the hall; or, if he occupies the pulpit against the wall at the refectory's lower end, they have to give him a stool, or a bulky folio of manuscript, to stand upon.

Even so, his head does little more than just emerge. For Ulric was but a puny child, when first born. Those were days of thews and sinews, when men were chiefly valued for being able to break a horse-shoe with their fingers, or to make the sweeping two-handed sword whistle round their heads. Ulric's parents had been in despair at the weakliness of their boy's *physique*. Probably, that is the reason why he now wears the canon's budge fur, instead of ruffling it in three-piled velvet from Byzantium, among the pages in

* The author (lately deceased) of *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, of the *Casus Sancti Galli*, &c.

† *Ubi vel in puncto peccare capitale erat, lector inoffensus creber erat.* Pertz adds the words: *quamvis canonicus:* but we must acquit him of all suspicion of a quiet sarcasm in the additional clause, or of any sly hit at some contemporary Canon, who perhaps mumbled his office indistinctly, or may even have made false quantities.

the court of Henry the Fowler. But, only hear him read! Would any of the said pages who can overmatch him at the joust and the leaping-bar, be able even to spell out the Martyrology, which little Canon Ulrich is monotoning so correctly, and with such music of utterance? It is doubtful if they could save their necks by so much as a neck-verse,* if need were. And Ulric, had he been up to their mark in the horse-play, might never have been bishop, or Saint either. *Infirma mundi elegit Deus, et contemptibilia, et quæ non sunt, ut ea quæ sunt, destrueret.*†

At Saint-Gall's, Ulric had not only the advantage of his Benedictine teachers, to lead him along the narrow way. He came, moreover, under a hallowing female influence. A great blessing to a young life, especially when the influence is exercised at home. It establishes a sweet attractive tradition of goodness, and imprints the love of our Lord in the soul, whilst yet in tender and impressible childhood.

Every woman may be said to take after one of two mothers; she is a daughter of the first Eve, or of the second. She may allure others to tread the same path of frivolity, luxury and indolence, of vain self-complacency and love of flattering praise, to the siren strains of which evil counsellers she moves upon the broad and downward road. In that case, she is portrayed by the wisest of men as "the stranger who softeneth her words," and whose words, by their very softness, are not those of wisdom or life eternal. But if she be a daughter of Mary, *the* Woman alike of Genesis and the Apocalypse, she is the *mulier fortis* whom Solomon almost despaired of finding,‡ who "puts forth her hand to strong things," to the harder attainments of the Christian life; whose words, enforced by her example, can strengthen others' "feeble knees" on the way to life eternal.

Such, to young Ulric, was a holy recluse, named

* Readers of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* will not need to be reminded that the "neck-verse" was the limit of Deloraine's literary attainments, by his own acknowledgment. It was a verse of the Psalms, placed before the eyes of a culprit arraigned for his life, by reading which he could claim "benefit of clergy"—the exemption, namely, from being judged by a lay tribunal.

† 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

‡ Prov. xxxi. 10, &c.

Catherine Wiborada.* After a pilgrimage made to Rome, with her brother Hitto, Catherine had felt herself called to a solitary though unconventual life, and had pursued it, first in the neighbourhood of the Cathedral of Constance, then at Saint-George's. Finally, she had petitioned the Bishop of Constance solemnly to enclose her in a cell near to the church of Saint-Mang, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Saint-Gall's. Instances of this kind of entombment in a living sepulchre were found, from time to time, among the pious women of the middle ages.† Heroic eccentricities, that argued a high degree of perfection already attained, and a strong persistent determination to gain "a life hid with Christ in God." Where the world would presuppose mere mental stagnation, or lunacy, or absorption of every thought in self, the Church saw an especial source of strength to the mystical body of our Lord—the strength of intercession—in those rare and favoured souls, who penetrated nearer to the Centre of all, in proportion as they withdrew from the exterior circumference, or "upper crust."

Catherine's life, though unseen, was not therefore useless: she was far from dreaming away existence in her solitary cell. Prayer and meditation were interchanged with manual labour, as with the solitaries in Egypt. She had learnt the art of book-binding; so the manuscripts of Saint-Gall's monastic library, and (doubtless) the ponderous antiphonarium and martyrology for the choir, were bound and kept in order by her care. She made the altar-breads for mass, and was, in a word, a sort of incarcerated sacristan. A number of pious women came and grouped themselves in habitations around her cell, for the benefit of her spiritual counsel. It seemed like a small Thebaid of devout souls, transported from the sands of Egypt to the smiling environs of the lake of Constance.

While his young companions pursued their sports, Ulric

* The writer of the article in Goschler's *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique* names her "Saint Catherine Wiborada;" but the name would be searched for in vain, in Alban Butler, and in other lists of Saints. Perhaps a local and popular repute for sanctity has given occasion to the title.

† See the notice of S. Verdiana, above.

sought the recluse's cell; and through the small window, her only avenue of communication with the outer world, received such earnest and discreet advice, as deepened every good impression hitherto made on him. Precious gifts for early life! how is it that such words are often withheld, and young souls remain unfed, unformed? By what want of faith, by what unworthy moral cowardice, do people let the golden opportunity go by? "Let my speech distil as the dew, as a shower upon the herb, and as drops upon the grass."* Such maintainers of an untimely silence† lose a great deal for themselves; for "By thy words thou shalt be justified." "Give, and it shall be given to you." ‡

Wiborada not only formed young Ulric's soul to solid virtue, but also communicated to him his future path in life. After a triduum of fervent prayer, she declared to him that it was not the Divine will that he should yield to the earnest wish of the monks of Saint-Gall, and take their habit, with a view to being one day at their head. He was to be a bishop, at a place toward the east, where a river divided two countries; there he would have to suffer more than any of his predecessors in the See, at the hands both of pagans, and of Christians unworthy of the name.

All this was accomplished in due season. The bishop of Augsburg, Adalbéro, a man of distinguished gifts and great influence, died, and was succeeded by Hittine. On Hittine's death, in 923, the credit which S. Ulric's nephew, Burchard, duke of Alemannia, enjoyed at the Emperor's court, procured the election of the youthful and saintly Canon, who could not have been much older than his nephew. We must of course suppose that all things were done according to due ecclesiastical order; or it is certain that S. Ulric would never have been a party to their being done at all. There may be a very real interior *Nolo episcopari*, with little outward demonstration. Besides, he was supported by Wiborada's prophecy, which assured him of two things. His elevation to this responsible charge was the will of God: and, again, he was going to a position of much suffering. His episcopal chair was not to prove a couch of roses. Our Lord seemed to be saying of him, as

* Deut. xxxii. 2. † Eccles. iii. 7.
‡ S. Matt. xii. 37; S. Luke vi. 38.

of the great S. Paul: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake."*

On arriving at his native place, in this new capacity, he found the cathedral and the other churches in ruins. Augsburg, together with the surrounding country, had been pillaged by the Magyars. This Turkish or Scythian tribe, scarcely less terrible than the Huns, had come westward from the Caucasus, some thirty years before. Under their chief, Arpad, they had swept over Hungary, and easily overcame the mixed and disunited populations of Slavs, Bulgarians, Wallachians, Alemanni, and even Italians, who occupied that territory under several petty rulers. A fierce and roving race of men were those invading Magyars. They made constant raids, even upon distant provinces, carrying fire and sword: and so greatly were they dreaded, that the Alemanni and the Italians added to their litanies a petition "to be delivered from the fury of the Magyars."

S. Ulric's first care, therefore, was to raise up again the holy places. He summoned architects, he aroused the zeal of the poor decimated people, his flock; he himself was the life and soul of this movement of restoration. The church of S. Afra, patroness of Augsburg, who, with her companions, had suffered martyrdom on the spot under Maximian Herculeus,† was an especial object with him; he rebuilt it with devout care, though we shall see him forced to do so all over again, before he dies.

Scarcely was this pious work accomplished, when the Magyars burst once more into Bavaria, came to Augsburg, and besieged it. The horrors and desolation of their last visit taught the inhabitants what to expect, this second time also. S. Ulric opposed to them the arms of prayer. He collected together all the little ones who were still unweaned; he ranged them round the altar where he himself was praying. He mingled his supplications with the inarticulate cries of these innocents, unconscious of their danger, but radiant with baptismal grace; who were bleating, all the while, as S. Augustine‡ says of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem, those firstling lambs of God's flock. So Ulric delivered the city of Augsburg. He who had been moved

* Acts ix. 16. † Aug. 7, A.D. 304.
‡ Serm. I. De Innocentibus.

to compassion,* for the multitude in Nineve who knew not their right hand from their left, was pleased to bid the fierce besiegers retire, for the sake of the Bishop and the infant children.

The Magyars, however, appeared before Saint-Gall's; and among other savage deeds, slew the pious recluse Wiborada in her penitential cell. Thus, the same sword, (it may be said), was beaten back by the Lord in one place, and permitted to have its way in another—and both in mercy. Ulric was preserved for after-service to the Church and to souls; Wiborada was taken to the eternal recompense of her life-long sacrifice. She pleaded efficaciously in Heaven for the young bishop, whose mitre, with its halo of sanctity, she had foreseen by revelation.

The remainder of S. Ulric's life was divided between irksome duties at Court, imposed on him by his ecclesiastical dignity in days when the two were so closely allied; and the sedulous care of a pastor for his flock. He retained a position of high trust at the right hand of Henry, surnamed the Fowler, till that sovereign's death in 936, and afterwards served with equal loyalty his son and successor, Otho I. "Although this service neither made him an empty courtier nor a rude combatant,"† and though he had never lost sight of his duties as bishop to his diocese, he found himself more and more urged by the desire to devote himself exclusively to the duties of his pastoral charge. When at length enabled to do this, his life at Augsburg was conspicuously that of a Saint. Rigorous to himself, gentle, compassionate, hospitable to others, he did in truth "allure to brighter worlds, and point the way."

His charity to the poor kept pace with his other virtues; while his personal life was modelled on the Benedictine rule: for he had never forgotten his early days at Saint-Gall's, nor the lessons of Wiborada. But, as bishop, he fulfilled S. Paul's charge on the article of hospitality,‡ and

* Jonas iv. 11.

† A story goes that, in the Middle Ages, a warlike bishop of Beauvais was taken prisoner, manfully fighting in full armour at the head of his retainers. His captor thereupon sent the prisoner's coat of mail to the Pope, with the words formerly addressed to Jacob regarding Joseph's torn and blood-stained garment: "See whether this be thy son's coat, or not."

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 8.

entertained numerous guests with abundance. A priest of his household, moreover, was charged to see that, when the bishop came to table, the poor received either a liberal alms, or the first course that was served. During his constant and self-denying visitations of his diocese, they followed him in troops, and were maintained by his fatherly bounty.

Once more, he is to encounter the Magyars. In 955, they swarmed into Bavaria in greater numbers than before, and spread devastation from the Danube to the Black Forest. They crossed the river Lech, on which Augsburg stands, burnt once more the church of S. Afra, and besieged the city. Then appeared the greatness of the man who lives in God. Ulric, stoled and on horseback, without defensive armour, remained in the thick of the onset, animating his troops amid a storm of arrows and stones. The besiegers, on their side, urged on their scaling-parties with blows and scourges; but the fury of man never can pierce the shield of God, when He so wills. The Magyars were repulsed; and Ulric, having superintended the strengthening of the defences, and organized a procession of supplication composed of the women of Augsburg, retired to say matins, and then Mass. He gave Holy Communion to his brave troops; he encouraged them by the words of David: "Though I walk amid the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me." He then led them again to the ramparts, where the savage enemy was applying his scaling ladders at every side of the walls.

But at that moment appeared the Emperor Otho, with an army he had hastily gathered together. He, too, was animated with supreme confidence in the Most High: he held in his hand the holy lance* which S. Henry of Germany had obtained from Rudolf king of Burgundy. A fierce battle ensued, and a decisive victory, known as that of the Lech, or Lechfeld. The enemy lost an immense number; the survivors, panic-stricken, fled, and were pursued till evening. Such as escaped the sword perished in the waters of the Lech: and of all the host, which had

* Probably the lance held by Constantine when the miraculous Cross marshalled him to victory. It was said to have contained a portion of one of the Sacred Nails.

composed that last predatory expedition of the Magyars, only seven persons returned to their native land.*

Ulric, also, is on his way home; to that better country, of which his sanctity has secured to him the citizenship. His sovereign and dear personal friend Otho I., has preceded him to the tomb, in the same year 973. The bishop himself is now eighty-three years of age, and has held his pastoral staff for half a century. A son of S. Benedict, in heart, he has always been; and true friend of those who have the privilege of religious vows. Had it been the Divine will, he would fain have returned to Saint-Gall's, to die in the house where he had first quaffed the heavenly wisdom: but he is to die in harness.

When no longer able to offer the Holy Sacrifice, they lead him, or carry him, to assist at it. He recites his canonical hours, with whatever difficulty. The provost Gerard, who probably wrote his life, reads to him the Lives of the Saints and the Dialogues of S. Gregory, and hears him speak of the things of Heaven. He has had revelations made to him, and an apparent gift of prophecy: of these, too, he speaks, so far as it becomes him to do so. Some weeks before his death, he bids his chamberlain, Luitpold, distribute his personal effects to the poor: but they find hardly anything. The revenues of the diocese—and he has been a sort of prince-bishop—the abundant wealth he might have gathered as the minister and favourite of Emperors, have passed through his hands already, to Christ's poor. What, then, has he left, to bestow on those whom he loves so well? His blessing, his prayers, his sainted memory.

Strengthened by a heavenly vision, on the feast of S. John Baptist, Ulric raises himself from his bed of weakness, goes to the church he had built under that Saint's invocation, and there chants high Mass, without being upheld by mortal hand. It was for the last time that he then whispered the words of power that call the Living God to rest upon the altar of sacrifice. On the vigil of

* On their return, they were reckoned infamous by their countrymen, and declared incapable of holding land. S. Stephen afterwards took compassion on them, and gave to their descendants the convent of S. Lazarus in Vienna.

SS. Peter and Paul he awaited death, dressed in his grave-clothes; but death did not come till the fourth of July, 973, and then it found him on the ash-strewn floor, surrounded by provost and clergy, who were chanting the litanies. *Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.**

Ten years after S. Ulric's death, and just nine hundred years ago,† Liutolf, his successor in the See of Augsburg, went to Rome, and placed in the hands of Pope John XV. a small MS. book, containing an account of his life and and miracles. The Pope summoned a council in S. John Lateran, had the treatise read, and then, with the concurrence of all present, decreed the canonization of this great servant of God, in a formula which has come down to us. It is an important one, as being perhaps the first formal document of canonization that can be quoted with certainty.

This Act expresses that "the memory of S. Udalric, bishop, is to be venerated with feelings of the most tender and faithful devotion; inasmuch as we worship and venerate the relics of martyrs and confessors, so as to adore Him whose martyrs and confessors they are. In such wise we honour the servants, that their honour redounds to the Lord, who has said: 'He that receiveth you, receiveth Me;' and that we, therefore, who trust not in our own righteousness, may be continually aided by their prayers and merits before the Lord of all mercy."

COLLECT.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the feast of blessed Ulric, Thy confessor and pontiff, which we reverentially celebrate, may increase our devotion and promote our salvation. Through.

* Psalm lvi. 8. † Written in 1883.

SAINT HELENA,

EMPRESS.

AUGUST 18.

ABOUT A.D. 327.

I.

"STEADY, now, steady! strike together, my men!" cried Xanthus, the master of the works, who had been appointed by the Empress to clear away the accumulations on Calvary. The profane statue of an idol, a Venus that had been set up there by the Emperor Hadrian,* on the summit of an earthen mound, to efface all memory of the Crucifixion,—this was the first thing to be thrown down. They were in search of the Cross, and had to demolish what spoke of profane affections.

"First one side, then the other," continued Xanthus, "or you'll get yourselves hurt, some of you. There's tons of marble in that old idol, if it comes down on ye. Not so fast, young man," to Zelotes, a youth lately converted from heathenism, who was hewing away with all his might. "A measur'd pace, *that* wins the race."

It was Xanthus' version of some Greek proverb equivalent to the *chi va piano, va sano*, of a later day.

"Nay, then, if it *did* come down on us, some of us would be martyrs," answered Zelotes, cheerily. "For my part, I had rather have my young life crushed out of me in so good a cause, than creep through an old age with *tussis*

* "This he did, as conceiving that the root and foundation of the Church would be destroyed, if idols were worshipped in those places where Christ was born in order to suffer" (S. Paulin. Epist. 11).

vel tarda podagra." But he was under orders; so he rested a few moments on his heavy, long-handled mallet, to recover breath.

"Speak not lightly of martyrdom, young man," said a by-stander, addressing him in an under tone. "It was a blessed privilege to those who were called to it; but no man was allowed to rush upon his death."

"Lightly?" echoed Zelotes, turning upon him; "no such thing. My own uncle," he added, in a more reverential tone, "went to join the Blessed ones in the days of Maxentius. They dislocated his joints, hanging him by his feet to the *catasta*, with a ponderous stone round his neck; and so he painfully breathed forth his soul—"

"Into the bosom of his God," supplied the other, bending his head and crossing himself.

Meanwhile, the work of pious demolition continued. Stroke after stroke weakened the hold of the image on its pedestal; it began to sway and to totter. As the towering statue that Nabuchodonosor saw in his dream was smitten "upon the feet thereof" by the stone cut out of a mountain without hands, so now, the new power that had appeared on the earth, the power of the Cross, was overthrowing the symbol of one of those corrupt motives that have ever swayed the children of fallen Adam. "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world."

A few more powerful blows, with dull heavy echoes, as the mallets crash upon the marble, and the idol topples to its fall.

"Now a push, all of you!" cries Xanthus, quite enthusiastic by this time. He was a good practical Christian, as well as a good master of works, and he warmed to the job in hand. Well were it, if all iconoclasts were bent on breaking up idols and falsehoods in so righteous a cause.

"A long push, and a strong push, and a push all together!" And the push was given, by the united strong arms of many workmen; converted Romans, converted Jews. They were now engaged in a common work, united in the one body that is one, yet manifold; "where

there is neither Gentile nor Jew, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all."

The heavy, lumbering Aphrodite fell prone; a prostrate mass, as Dagon, centuries before, lay upon his face in his temple before the ark of the Lord; as the image of Apollo, some two hundred years after, fell at the command of S. Benedict in its idol-grove on Monte Cassino; as the idol Herman,* a false God among the pagan Saxons, fell at the command of Charlemagne, seven centuries, more or less, after S. Helena died.

"So let all Thy enemies perish, O Lord!" exclaimed Xenocrates, a priest, who had been deputed by Macrinus, Bishop of Jerusalem, to superintend the search now to be made. They were going to burrow in the earth below the pedestal of this overthrown thing.

The cry was taken up by the eager crowd: it echoed and reverberated from the massive wall of the once Holy City, that had some prospect, on this downfall of paganism, of becoming holy once more.

"So let all Thy enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love Thee shine, as the sun shineth in his rising!"

Xanthus was a man of a practical turn; and when the pious enthusiasm had a little subsided, he went on at once with the demolition. The statue was reduced into large fragments, under workmanlike blows of mallet and chisel, then delivered over to the tender mercies of the Christian crowd, who hammered it with stones into smaller chips, and pelted them into the valley beneath. Next the pedestal; that also had to be cleared away. It was raised by powerful levers from its bed of hard "Roman cement;" then it was tumbled down the slope by aid of large rollers, hewn from trunks of olive wood: olive trees that had grown around the farm or villa of Gethsemani, and feathered up the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

Meanwhile, the crowd was commenting variously on this event, according to the individual characters that composed it.

"The pious Empress adds another gem to her immortal crown by this day's work," said an old man, lately a Jew,

* Ermen, or Irmen, from whom so many Teutonic names are derived; as, Ermenigildis, Ermintrude, Ermingarde, &c.

but now converted to the faith to which SS. Peter and Paul had been brought from the ranks of the Synagogue.

He looked round for sympathy in what he had said, and he encountered the knit brows and sternly-folded arms of a pagan, scowling on the work. This man's father had been among those who had helped to erect the idol in former days, now happily gone by. He may still have another touch at his favourite employment of persecuting, if he lives on till the days of Julian the Apostate. But he will be an old man by that time, for Julian will not be proclaimed Emperor for some forty years to come. And his indulgence in blood will be brief; for the Apostate will be slain, four years after his accession to the purple.

Fifty strong arms, and more, are at work, with pickaxe and spade. They have cleared away a great part of the mound, finding many stone fragments of various periods, but, as yet, no sign of any beam of wood. There had been no "Invention" of the Cross, up to this; but they are confident of finding it, nevertheless. The multitude, now bidden to stand aloof, to let the loose earth be thrown out and shovelled away, look on with intense interest. The more devout among them are praying; the rest stand silent, awed, expectant. Who could be unmoved at the prospect of seeing, at any moment, emerging from the ground, the *Dulce Lignum*,* the saving wood on which Incarnate Love had hung to buy then back from death eternal?

II.

Love, and the Cross, these two great thoughts occupy the minds of most who are present on the spot. They find their way to the lips of the priest, Xenocrates, who comes to the end of a psalm he is reciting, then draws a long breath, and says to a deacon at his side:

"Well and holily did the blessed martyr Ignatius write of himself: 'My Love is crucified.'"

"Yes, reverend Father," answered the deacon, "and had not holy Paul written, before Ignatius was a bishop,

* The expression of the Church's hymn:

Dulce lignum, dulces clavos
Dulce pondus sustinent.

'With Christ I am fastened to the Cross, yet I live, not I, but Christ liveth in me?'"

"To-day," continued Xenocrates, "we see the triumph of the King's standard over the power of the enemy. Yonder shapeless fragments, which they have hurled into the valley towards Damascus, represented the great antagonist motive that would match itself against the conquering Cross. Which will you have, the Cross, or the concupiscence of this evil world? Which will you have, bliss or torment eternal?"

"Such is the choice offered to man. Will you forsake the Fountain of living water, and dig to yourselves cisterns —broken cisterns that can hold no water?" *

"Will it not always be so?" asked the deacon Cyrillus.

"Aye, even to the end. Each will plead with the human soul, and plead with great power of attraction. Poor unaided nature will recognise the higher attraction, while led away by the lower—"

"I see the best, and yet the worse pursue,"† interposed the deacon, who was pretty well up in his classics.

"Aye," continued Xenocrates, "poor Ovid was there unconsciously chiming with the great Apostle's description of the same struggle in man: 'The law is spiritual, but I am carnal . . for I do not that good which I will: but the evil which I hate, that I do. . For to will is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not." ‡

"I fancy," pursued Cyrillus thoughtfully, "that men will often be misquoting such words, to justify their own neglect of the Cross in their daily lives."

"They will be wresting aside the Scriptures, then, to their own destruction, as blessed Peter warns us in his second epistle," answered the priest. "Our Lord, the Crucified, expressly foretells what shall be the over-mastering attractive power of His Cross, to those who have faith enough, and love enough, to follow its leadings. You remember, my Cyrillus, how it fell to your turn to

* Jer. ii. 13.

† Video meliora, proboque,
Deteriora sequor.
(Ovid. *Metam.* vii. 21.)

‡ Romans vii. 14—18.

chant the sacred words from the *ambo*, on the Lord's day some three weeks ago?"

"Oh, I remember," answered the deacon; "stay: thus they ran:" he partly hummed, partly recited, in a low tone, by the rhythm and inflexions of the Church's strains: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. This He said, signifying what death—"

They were interrupted by a loud shout from the workmen, and by the irresistible pressure of the crowd, who now, with one strong impulse, closed upon the spot. Xenocrates and his younger companion were almost carried off their feet. Priest as he was, and venerated accordingly, there was then little thought of him. All hearts and minds were fixed on his Master and theirs.

The mattocks and spades had struck down upon something.

"*Stauros, stauros! Ho Stauros!*—A cross, a cross! *The* Cross! The Cross of the Lord! The Saving Wood! See it, see it! They raise it on high! Hosanna!" Their words of enthusiasm and pious joy rent the air.

And slowly, extracted with much difficulty from its deep bed of earth, inch by inch, as the united force of many strong bronzed arms tugged and strained at it, a tall heavy cross rose up, in sight of all the multitude. It stood on end, and there rocked and swayed; the cross-beam was but loosely, indeed clumsily, jointed to the stem. Its earth-stained limbs showed ghastly in the sunlight that now began to slope westward over Jerusalem, glinting on the grey olives of the opposite slope, where Mount Olivet ascended irregularly to the east, over the outlines of the city, and the loftier profile of Herod's Temple.

"Stay!" exclaimed Xenocrates, authoritatively, with loud voice; "stay, children of the Faith, and hear me!" For hundreds, on the first sight of the cross before them, were rushing upon it, to bathe it with their kisses and tears.

"In the name of the Crucified, stay!"

They looked back at him, irresolute; while he proceeded:

"Know you not, *three* crosses were raised on the place of sculls, on that great Paschal day? Know you not, that

for our sake He was reckoned among the transgressors, and that a robber hung crucified on either side of the Sinless One? Would ye venerate a doubtful relic? Far be that from any child of the Church. This may be the cross of the good thief; not of the Lord. Then, truly, it is an instrument of martyrdom—the martyrdom of a Saint. But it *may* be the infamous gibbet of the impenitent robber."

The multitude shrank away from it, as he spoke.

"It is true," observed a Christian by-stander; "we are always taught to be slow in paying veneration to relics of departed Saints, till they are ascertained to have been indeed martyrs, or other great friends of God."

"So are they careful," answered a pilgrim from Rome, who had come to venerate the Holy Places, and stood within ear-shot of his remark: "so are they in the Eternal City, when the *fossores* in our underground catacombs come upon any corpse buried there in days of persecution. Our blessed Pontiff, Silvester, has forbidden any special veneration to be paid to the remains, unless they find, buried in the grave, or sculptured on the slab, some unmistakable sign of martyrdom."

"Aye, indeed, brother?" returned the first: "I would fain hear more at some future time regarding these things; just now, like thyself, I am all expectation of what may be—"

Another shout from those who stood nearest to the diggers, and soon a second cross emerged, arose, swayed and quivered, as they held it upright, opposite to the first, black against the evening sky.

III.

"It is high time," thought Xenocrates, "to entreat the presence of our Bishop. The Augusta herself also should be here, as she would assuredly desire to be; for the moment of the great discovery seems at hand. Hasten, Cyril," he added, to the deacon, "hasten to venerable Macarius; report to him what has already been found. I doubt not, he will despatch a messenger, perhaps thyself, to the palace. But away; they may arrive too late!"

Cyrillus sped on his message like the wind. But he had not to go so far as to the palace. As he neared the gate of

the City, he was met by a procession, which Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, had decreed, on the rumour being spread that the first cross was found. First, the minor clergy, each in their degree,* wound forth from the Damascus Gate, beginning with the inferior and younger. They paced quietly and orderly forth, with the modest recollection of those who felt a procession to be more than an empty pageant, at which to gaze and gossip.

The Church had now for some years enjoyed peace, and of course, therefore, had developed her ritual with becoming solemnity. If Judaism had been "the letter that killeth," and the Gospel had come in as "the Spirit that giveth life," it was not fitting that the ministration of death should be gorgeous with the beauty of holiness, as the ritual of Solomon had made it, and the ministration of the Spirit be shorn of fair and symbolic observances, to give glory to the Most High, and edification to His faithful.

After the clerics, who were, like young Samuel, "ministering before the Lord, girded with a linen ephod," came the sub-deacons; then the deacons, in the vestments appointed for their processions. They were in sacred Orders, and thus irrevocably pledged, by their own act and deed, to a life of holy celibacy.† Their place of ministration was at the very altar, and by the priest's side; the great transaction of their every day was the adorable Sacrifice of the Lamb of God. At this highest of human acts they ministered, the deacons nighest, the others more remotely. To a mind penetrated with the sublime truths conveyed in such words, how incongruous it must ever seem, that men so exalted in the spiritual sphere, caught up to be so near the Supreme, should live the rest of their day in a domestic circle, lowered by its petty harasses, by its gains or mean enjoyments. The celibacy of the clergy would have been an

* A critic has objected, that the minor orders of the clergy were not likely to be so defined in the Church in the East. But what we gain in accuracy, we should lose in fulness of description. It is hard to be deprived of our minor clergy, at a stroke. It might have been added, that in the East, at the present day at least, the diaconate does not necessarily lead to the priesthood.

† It must be remembered, that when the present Greek and other Oriental priests are spoken of as "a married clergy," none of them are permitted to marry *after* entering sacred Orders.

irrepressible instinct in every Catholic soul, were it even no part of the Church's discipline.

Then walk the priests, who have "purchased to themselves a good degree,"* by the worthy exercise of their diaconate. They have been "proved;" and then, after that scrutiny and probation, they have ministered blamelessly—deacons after the heart of the great Apostle—"chaste, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."† Anointed now and made christs‡ by the chrism of the priesthood, priests of the order of Melchisedech, by their consecrated hands is offered to the Lord of Hosts that "clean oblation"§ that shall never fail, till the sun ceases to rise on a habitable earth.

Surrounded by his priests comes Macarius, Bishop of the flock, and at his side walks the aged Empress, Helena. A few of the Imperial Guards follow, in their purple uniform, heavy with gold; and armed with their glittering armour. Constantine has made it a point that his mother should be so attended, whether in her litter, or when she walks abroad. This military accompaniment ill accords with her own humility. Empress she is, but she is also Saint; and the Saints, after the example of their King, have ever been "meek and humble of heart." Helena prefers the attendance of her handmaidens, whom she has trained to an almost monastic seclusion in the palace at Byzantium, and whom she has now brought with her on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

But who is this, that closes the procession? A strange and unusual sight, surely. Neither rubric of the Church, nor Court observance, provides for an old woman in a litter, on occasions like these. Yet here she comes, in the Empress' own palanquin, and borne by six of Helena's strong-armed attendants in splendid livery. It is the poor old bed-ridden Noemi, a widow, faithful and devout, long afflicted with palsy. On her miserable pallet she had lain, tardy weary days and months and years, with hardly power to stir a finger. But her pains had been assuaged by the tender care of one of these faithful deaconesses, whom

* 1 Tim. iii. 13.

† *Ibid.* iii. 10. ‡ Psalm civ. 15. § Mal. i. 11.

the Church had called into existence and consecrated, even while yet in the catacombs.

It had been a thought of the Bishop Macarius, that if more than one cross were discovered in the search, some test of miracle would be needed—supposing the Lord to vouchsafe such a proof—in order to discern that special Cross on which He hung, for us men and for our salvation. And, as his Venerableness has just visited Noemi, and administered to her the Sacrament of the Lord's Body, undertaking that office of charity by reason of her age, her afflictions, and devout life, it occurred to him to have her now conveyed to the spot. The aged sufferer, then, is borne along, powerless in body, racked with pain, but with all the strength of her soul engaged in prayer. By the rule of that promise of our Lord, "according to your faith, so be it done to you," we may be sure that if a miracle *is* to be shown to-day, Noemi will place no obstacle of hesitation or unbelief to the free course of Divine power.

IV.

Now, while the procession winds its way, we have leisure to study the features of the Empress, as, with slow step and folded hands, praying silently, she walks by the side of S. Macarius. The veil of her widowhood partly shades a face which, beside that mourning token, is worn with the lines of age and sorrow. For Helena has now numbered eighty winters; nor is she simply a widow. She has outlived the Pagan husband who repudiated her. Constantius Chlorus had married her in Britain, before she received that faith to which afterwards she was unable to persuade him. Her son Constantine had been born in our island; at Colchester, or, some say, at York. But when the father, from a private officer in the imperial army, rose to power, and was associated by Maximian Herculeus in the Empire of the West, with the title of Cæsar, he looked around him for a connection that should strengthen his high position. His actual wife, the Lady Helena, though daughter to a king,* did not come up to his new ambitious

* Leland asserts that her father was King Coilus, or Hoel, a British king who lived in constant alliance with the Romans, and acknowledged their sovereignty. He gave his name to Colchester (*Coel-castra*), the arms of which town are still a cross between four crowns.

standard, as an advantageous match. Besides, one condition of his being made Cæsar over the provinces of Gaul and Britain was, that he should marry Theodora, the daughter-in-law of Maximian. So Helena is twice a widow, or twice desolate. Once, when she was discarded at the bidding of mere human ambition; then, again, when the ambitious man, Chlorus himself, bowed to the sceptre of a mightier Cæsar than he, or than Herculeus either—King Death.

Helena has come from the palace in Byzantium assigned by her son to the Empress-mother; she has undertaken this long weary pilgrimage, to venerate the spots that had been sanctified by our Lord's Birth, His Teaching, and Passion. Her late husband, on his death-bed, is said to have acknowledged the One true God. This only makes the account in Eusebius read the more strangely, that Helena herself did not embrace the Faith till after Constantine's victory over Maxentius—that supernatural victory that was gained by aid of the *Labarum*, or holy standard of the Cross. For the victory was gained in 312. At all events, Helena was not going to be behind her son in showing favour to the Christians; and what ample and magnificent favour *he* had shown, as a catechumen, is recorded in Baronius.

Being once converted, "then so perfect was her conversion, that she embraced all the heroic practices of Christian perfection, especially the virtues of piety and alms-deeds, in which she doubtless was a great spur to the Emperor. Her dutiful son always honoured and respected her, forgetting in her regard that he was Emperor of the world,* unless to employ his power in serving her." In 326, the year after the Council of Nicæa, Constantine had commissioned S. Macarius to institute a search on Calvary for the Cross, and to build a magnificent church on the spot. This had been at the suggestion of S. Helena, whose desire to find the sacred Wood of our redemption has now drawn her, at her advanced age, all the way from Constantinople to Jerusalem.

And so we come back to the procession in which she wends her way through the Damascus Gate, to the Golgotha that lies a short distance beyond it.

* The world as then known, which was about co-extensive with the Empire. Compare S. Luke ii. 1, Acts xi. 28.

They find that three crosses have been exhumed, together with that title, once placed over the Cross of the Lord, which the faithful may still venerate in Rome, in the Church of "The Holy Cross in Jerusalem." A tablet of wood, or the principal fragment of it, decayed in part by lying for nearly three centuries under the damp earth. It lay buried apart, attached to none of the three; so the proof they are in search of, is still wanting. It showed, rudely chiselled into it, the threefold inscription, once set over the Head of the Crucified, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; of which we read in the Gospel:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

The sculptor had done his work in haste; the Chief Priests and Scribes and Elders of the people had stood over him as he chiselled away, their wolfish eyes glaring down upon every character as it was formed, showing their teeth, and growling with dissatisfaction: "Write not, the King of the Jews, but that He said: I am the King of the Jews." But Pilate's orders were precise, and the sculptured letters are venerated to-day by millions, who have little to do with unbelieving Jews, but everything with Himself, the Divine Redeemer.

* * * * *

Half an hour after, the procession returns—but with what a change! There is less recollection, and a somewhat broken order, because of the greatness of the joy. Chants of triumph, extemporised out of such Psalms as speak exultation and thankfulness; Helena raising her eyes to heaven, brimming with tears of gladness!* Beside her, tottering under the weight of the saving Wood, that is partly supported by a priest, as Simon of Cyrene had carried it once before, comes Macarius. He had borne many spiritual crosses in former days; now, with glad heart, rejoicing in the Lord, he bends beneath that blessed burden—the very Cross of Jesus!

* S. Helena began immediately to build the church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was solemnly inaugurated in 335. A portion of the Holy Cross, in a silver case, was given to S. Macarius, to be perpetually preserved in Jerusalem. Another portion, together with the Holy Nails, became the property of Constantine. S. Helena herself died the year after the "Invention."

And who precedes both Empress and Bishop, with glad elastic step, almost dancing before the Cross, as David before the Ark? It is one who has a right to be there; having been the object of a very signal favour and miracle from on high. Yes, Noemi, your youth has been renewed like the eagle's, by one touch of the "blessed wood, by which justice cometh." * If we wish to find the litter that brought you, and the bearers, we should have to seek them in a place incongruous to our thoughts of the moment—some wayside tavern, where the imperial servitors, perhaps not even catechumens, feel it incumbent on them to refresh themselves, after their easy march.

Only take care, Noemi, that restored health and strength are devoted to His service, whose dying agonies have bought for you so great a boon.

"And do you take heed" (she might well rejoin) "that your sacramental approaches to the same fountain of life cause you to grow 'to the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.'" †

COLLECTS.

O God, who by the glorious Finding of the Cross of salvation didst renew the miracles of Thy Passion; grant, we beseech Thee, that ransomed through this tree of life, we may obtain election unto life eternal. Who livest.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst reveal to Blessed Helena the place where Thy Cross lay hid, and didst will that through her means Thy Church should be enriched with this precious treasure: grant us, through her intercession, to obtain the rewards of eternal life, by the price [paid on] that life-giving wood. Who livest and reignest.

* Wisd. xiv. 7. † Eph. iv. 13.

SAINT REMIGIUS,

BISHOP OF RHEIMS.

OCTOBER 1.

ABOUT A.D. 534.

THE first of October is the birth-day, or rather translation-day, "at Rheims in Gaul, of S. Remigius, bishop and confessor, who converted the Frankish nation to Christ, having admitted Clovis their king [into the Church], at the sacred font of baptism, and by the sacraments of the faith; and who, when he had fulfilled many years in his bishopric, eminent for sanctity and miracles, departed this life on the fifteenth of January; though his feast is kept on this day, on which his sacred body was afterwards translated."*

Noticing S. Remigius himself, therefore, we come across a great historical event. The special work given him to do, was, in fact, to found the Christian kingdom of France, as distinct from the former Roman province of Gaul. France, whose kings were afterwards to be entitled "Most Christian," and the zeal of whose children was to perform great things for God, within the bounds of their own fair land, and in missionary enterprise among the heathen.

The early vigorous life of Christianity in Gaul is recorded in many Acts of the primitive martyrs. S. Dionysius the Areopagite, S. Paul's convert at Athens,† had penetrated as far as Paris with the word of life, and shed his blood for it there. Even before him, S. Lazarus, as we have already seen, had been wafted by God's good Provi-

* Roman Martyrology for Oct. 1. † Acts xvii. 34.

dence across the Mediterranean, landed at Marseilles, and became bishop and martyr.

After the time of S. Dionysius, S. Clement, Pope, "whose name is in the book of life," sent four bishops into Gaul:* S. Nicasius to Rouen, S. Eutropius to Nantes, S. Lucian to Beauvais, and S. Taurinus to Evreux.

S. Pothinus, who is said to have been sent into Gaul by S. Polycarp, became bishop of Lyons. He was ninety years old when, in the year 177, the persecution under Marcus Aurelius extended to Gaul, and swept away S. Pothinus himself, with many of his flock. Their sufferings have come down to us, in one of the earliest and most vivid of the records of Christian martyrdom. Eusebius, in the next century, has embalmed this precious document in his ecclesiastical history. It is a letter from "the servants of Christ who dwell at Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, to the brethren settled in Asia and Phrygia, having the same faith with us, and the same hope of redemption." They report back to the East, whence Pothinus their apostle and bishop came, the fruits of his long labours and his blood in Gaul.

A more celebrated name than S. Pothinus was that of one who had come also from S. Polycarp; a priest, who, after the martyrdom, was sent by the suffering Church at Lyons to Pope S. Eleutherius. This was S. Irenæus, by birth also a Greek. On his return to Lyons from Rome, Irenæus was consecrated to the perilous post of the martyred Pothinus; and like him, empurpled his episcopal chair with his blood. His martyrdom was in 202, during the persecution under Severus. With their bishop also went to glory, by the same painful road, "nearly the whole population of his city."†

As to events immediately following, we may take the summary of Guizot, as a thoughtful and candid Protestant historian. Would that all who shared with him that deep religious misfortune shared also his calm balance of judgment, and spirit of conscientious labour in the investigation of facts. History would not then be the conspiracy against truth, which it is at present.

"With his (S. Irenæus') episcopate," records Guizot,‡

* Cressy's *Ch. Hist. of Britain*, p. 39.

† Rom. Martyrol. for June 28. ‡ *Hist. de France*, vol. i. p. 115.

"began the swarm of Christian missioners which, towards the close of the second century, and during the third, spread themselves throughout Gaul, preaching the Christian faith, and founding Churches. Some of them went from Lyons, under the impulse given by S. Irenæus; others from Rome, especially during the pontificate of S. Fabian, Pope, who suffered martyrdom in 249. These were SS. Felix and Fortunatus at Valence, S. Ferréol at Besançon, S. Marcellus at Chalons-sur-Saone, S. Benignus at Dijon, S. Trophimus at Arles, S. Paul at Narbonne, S. Saturninus at Toulouse, S. Martial at Limoges, SS. Andeol and Privatus in the Cevennes, S. Austremonius at Clermont-Ferrand, S. Gatian at Tours, S. Denis at Paris, and so many others* whose names are almost unknown, except in learned historical treatises, or on the very spots where they have preached, and striven, and conquered—often at the price of their lives. Such were the founders of the Christian faith and Church in France. At the opening of the fourth century their work, if not achieved, was at least in the ascendant; and when, in 312, Constantine proclaimed himself a Christian, he proved the fact, that Christianity had made conquest of the Roman world, and specially of Gaul. The majority of the inhabitants, in all probability, were not yet Christian: but it was undeniable that the Christians were the rising party, and the men of the future. Of the two great elements that were to combine in the formation of modern society, on the ruins of the Roman state, the moral element, the religion of Christ, had already taken possession of men's souls; and now, the wasted tracts of land were ready for those new people, whom history knows under the general name of Germans,† while the Romans designated them as barbarians."

* Butler (October 1, in a note) adds, SS. Sixtus and Sinicius, the Apostles of that province of which Rheims is the capital. He enumerates some of their disciples as having been martyred about the time of Diocletian (the period of the martyrdom of our protomartyr of England, S. Alban). Their relics were found in Rheims in the seventeenth century, near the church of S. Nicasius, who was the eleventh archbishop of Rheims, as S. Remigius was the fifteenth.

† Ger-mans, or men-of-war; (*guerre*, *war*, *wehr*, being all the same root). So, again, the Franks, at least by one interpretation, were the free men, unsubdued by Rome, and the Saxons, seachs-men, or men of the sword.

This last sentence of the able historical writer, whom it is a pleasure to quote, leads us back to S. Remigius. For Clovis, whom the Saint converted and baptized, as the first fruits of that prince's Frankish warriors and serfs, was one of the "barbarians" whose untaught vigour came in upon and overwhelmed the outworn civilisation of old Rome. Gaul, as was said above, was to become France; and instead of being a transalpine province of the decaying Roman Empire, was to start into a new life as a substantive independent kingdom.

In these two names, Remigius and Clovis, the teacher and the catechumen, we have represented to us two antagonist principles. There is the faith of Christ, first persecuted, then triumphant; and there is paganism, first rude and insolent, then submissive, converted; its former savage undisciplined energy now trained, and thus its once disciples elevated to true power in the scale of nations.

II.

S. Remigius was born near the middle of the fifth century, probably in 439, of noble and wealthy parents, who dwelt in their castle at Laon, devoting themselves to Christian good works. They were rewarded for their piety, as such parents generally are, by the graces bestowed upon their children. "Tell me with whom you consort," says a true proverb, "and I will tell you what sort of person you are." If the influence of companionship is so great, how much more that of parentage, early training, family tradition, parental example? In most cases, we may say: "So good a man must have had a good mother." Such is often the verdict of the Saints' lives, as well as of daily experience. How should it be otherwise, seeing that man is an imitative creature, and is more led by the eye than the ear, more by example, than by precept? Real conscientious goodness is catching, as well as evil; and it was by such a blessed contagion that the children of that noble Gaulish family drew in, with their first nourishment, the principles of a saintly life.

The eldest of the three sons of Emilius and Cilinia (such were the parents' names) was called Principius. He lived to be bishop of Soissons, which is in the same district of France

with Laon and Rheims. The second, whose name has not come down to us, feeling no vocation to the ecclesiastical state, engaged in holy matrimony. But, though himself thus debarred from the service of the altar, he was the father of one who became both bishop and saint; Lupus, who succeeded his uncle in the See of Soissons. With these two brothers, it seemed likely that the family at Laon would be complete, without further increase; for Emilius and his pious wife, like Zachary and S. Elizabeth, were "both well advanced in years." But a child of promise was yet to be born to them; one whose name should be annually rehearsed throughout the Church of Christ, whenever October opened, with its golden autumn days. That child was to be Remigius.

A holy man, Montanus, lived a solitary life in that part of the country. He was cultivating his own soul, mourning over and making reparation for the corruption of the times. The times, without any doubt, needed improvement. For more than a century, Christianity had now been peacefully professed in Gaul. Persecution had ceased; and with it had ceased the strong pressure its iron heel had maintained on man's evil tendencies. Prosperity brought licence in its train. In the early and hard times of the faith, the adorable sacrifice of the Mass had been celebrated by golden priests, in chalices of cheap material. Now, on the contrary, the chalices were gold and jewels, and the lives of the people, not to say of some priests, were far from being too richly gemmed with the precious ornaments of Christian grace.* So Montanus went on, mourning and praying, in the spirit of those who have God's interests at heart, and the welfare of souls: "My eyes have sent forth springs of water, because they have not kept Thy law."†

One night, as he was thus in his prayer, begging the mercy of our Lord, with many tears, it was revealed to him that his petitions were heard, and that the aged lady Cilinia

* Ribadeneira, in Oct. 1. And so S. Gildas, in Britain, a contemporary of Montanus, or nearly so, was writing his piteous complaint, *De Excidio Britanniæ*, in which he traces to the evil living of the British Christians, the scourge which was descending upon them, in reiterated strokes, from the Pictish and other heathen tribes in the north of the island.

† Psalm cviii. 136.

should bear a son, who should be called Remigius, and become "the reliever and repairer of all that kingdom." Whatever distance the cell of Montanus may have been from Laon, the hermit went to deliver this joyful prediction; and confirmed it, notwithstanding its being so unlikely, by announcing another miracle, which also came to pass in its time.

Remigius, then, as another Isaac, born according to promise, was brought up in the courts of the Lord's house, like another Samuel. "He was very peaceable," says Ribadeneira, "very devout, and inclined to all things of piety and learning, to which he applied himself with great diligence."* To avoid the dangerous occasions of youth, he shut himself up in a solitary place; though, even before that, he had chosen a secret apartment in his father's castle at Laon, where he spent a great part of his time in close retirement and contemplation. This was standing in the ninth century, and was visited with devout veneration when Hincmar, a later archbishop of Rheims, wrote the Saint's life. A retreat from the world and its illusions has in most cases been the preparation by which the Lord of the Church has formed such of His servants as He designs greatly to promote His glory. They have need to begin with themselves, if they are "appointed to bring forth much fruit, and their fruit to remain."† "Take heed to *thyself*, and to doctrine," is an injunction perilous to neglect, at all times. The young Remigius, however, was thinking of no particular work of teaching in the future. He went into retreat, like S. Ignatius afterwards into the cave of Manresa, chiefly in the interests of his own soul.

In this prayerful solitude he lived, till the age of two and twenty. But the more he concealed himself, the more the fame of his sanctity spread abroad. It was an enclosed light, yet its rays escaped through the chinks of the enclosure. And so, when Bennadius, archbishop of Rheims, died, the popular mind and voice turned upon the young

* Alban Butler says of S. Remigius that he had "an excellent genius, made great progress in learning, and in the opinion of S. Apollinaris Sidonius, who was acquainted with him in the earlier part of his life, he became the most eloquent person in that age."

† S. John xv. 16.

recluse. A widely felt impulse of this nature indicates, at times, the will of God. It did so in the case of S. Ambrose, whose wise exhortation to peace, while he was governor of a province, and had entered a tumultuous assembly at the head of a military force, inspired the people with a happy thought, how well they would prosper under his episcopal rule.

But the very qualities which attracted the minds of the Milanese to Ambrose, and of the men of Rheims to Remigius, induced the persons thus chosen to resist the popular will. As to S. Ambrose, the means he took to avoid consecration were only to be explained by some particular inspiration. S. Remigius, on his part, could plead his want of sufficient age, as well as his humble depreciation of his own qualities: and these he pleaded to the utmost.

Such is ever the temper of the Saints. They fear elevation and power over their fellow-men. Conscious of what they would become, if deserted by grace; penetrated with an alarmed sense of the reckoning at hand for talents received, and for the weighty sword of authority committed to their hands, they "have chosen to be abjects in the house of their God,"* rather than be raised up to a pinnacle from which there might be a deeper fall. Nor have their fears being exaggerated. "For a most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule. For to him that is little, mercy is granted; but the powerful shall be powerfully tormented. For God will not accept any man's person, neither will He stand in awe of any man's greatness: for He made the little and the great, and He hath equally care of all. But a greater punishment is prepared for the more mighty."†

Almighty God, however, who "puts down the mighty from their seat, exalts the humble." The sense of unfitness which oppressed Remigius, only showed him the more fitted

* Psalm lxxxiii. 2.

† Wisdom vi. 6—9. "The perfect conversion of the great ones of the world brings great increase to His kingdom. They who are placed in high stations must necessarily be to very many an occasion of eternal perdition or of salvation. And as they cannot go alone, so either a high degree of glory or a more than ordinary punishment will be their everlasting portion" (S. Fulgentius, quoted by Butler for July 15).

to bear rule; inasmuch as "no one rules with safety to himself, but he who willingly remains in subjection."* The popular choice is said to have been confirmed by miracle: and this, together with his great abilities, caused the bishops of the province to dispense with the letter of the canons, and to consecrate him, notwithstanding his youth.

From the moment when the mitre was placed on his brow, Remigius showed how solid were the virtues he had gained during those years of lonely prayer. "He was a great alms-giver, watchful, devout, perfect in all virtue. His conversation was rather divine than human. His words breathed nothing but the love of God. His countenance was gracious, grave, and so pleasant, that even to look upon it excited devotion, by reason of the great sanctity that shone therein. His words had a strange power, because, whatever he preached to others, he first practised it himself. He was terrible to the proud, but sweet and gentle to the humble. He avoided idleness, abhorred delights, desired labour, and loved to be despised. He could not endure honour, and was poor in worldly means, though rich in virtues. He was very careful in personal visitation of his diocese, not committing that office to any other. In a word, he was so perfect, and consummate in all virtues in his own soul, and so solicitous and careful a pastor in feeding and providing for the souls of his flock, that he seemed rather an angel come from heaven than a mortal man."†

As to his great eloquence, S. Sidonius Apollinaris,‡ who wrote his life, has left us a detailed account of it, as well as of the other eminent qualities of this model of bishops, and of his extraordinary gift of miracles.

III.

This was the man through whom God ordained to bring the nation of the Franks to Himself. Such as we are in our own interior life, such are we likely to be in our effect

* A Kempis.

† Ribadeneira.

‡ Bishop of Clermont, in the fifth century: a contemporary of S. Remigius. From being prince of the senate, patrician, and prefect of Rome under the Emperor Anthemius, he became a saintly bishop in Auvergne.

on others: and it generally demands a soul of no ordinary union with God to bring into the way of salvation a thorough pagan, or a confirmed unbeliever. How much more, a whole nation of them!

For the Franks were pagans, throughout their tribes; pagans, fierce and cruel, like the Saxons in the cradle of their race. Indeed, Frank and Saxon belonged to the same family of nations, and came from a small territory beyond the Elbe, which is now called Schleswig and Holstein. Their populations became superabundant; and, as in the days of Abraham and Lot, "the land was not able to bear them." Therefore, not being owners of flocks and herds, like those patriarchs, the young and adventurous of the Saxo-Frankish tribes took sword and spear and shield, and set out to carve their way to a new home. So did their cousins the Flemings, or Fleeing-men, "men expelled" by their kinsmen, as the learned interpret the name.* Each tribe, or division, of these adventurers, went on its several war-path: the Saxons from Schleswig, with the Angles from one especial corner of land within that duchy—the *angulus terræ* that gave them the name which they in turn bestowed on Britain. These crowded into one rude galley after another,† and steered for the white cliffs of Albion. The Fleander-men settled in Belgic Gaul, and talk Flemish there

* M. K. de Lettenhove, *Histoire de Flandre*, Introd. See also Appendix F, at the end of this volume. The Flemings allied themselves with the Franks in Gaul, and with the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, against the Roman dominion: contemptuously naming the Gauls and Britons who had submitted to Rome, "Walloons" and "Welsh," respectively.

† Modern criticism throws some discredit upon the received account that the brothers Hengist and Horsa came at one especial date, and with an overwhelming force. It makes those names merely symbolical of the White Horse, the Saxon standard; and teaches that the Saxon invasion was a more gradual movement than could be assigned to any two brothers. "As it is nearly certain that the year 449 is *not* the date of the first introduction of German tribes into Britain, we must consider that the displacement of the original British began at an earlier period than the one usually admitted, and consequently that it was more gradual than is usually supposed. Perhaps, if we substitute the middle of the fourth, instead of the fifth century, as the epoch of the Germanic immigration into Britain, we shall not be far from the truth." (Latham's *English Language*, p. 9, in which he follows Kemble's *Saxons in England*.

to this day. The Franks, under various tribal names, Catti, Sicambri, and others, pushed towards the right or eastern bank of the Rhine, and were continually harassing the territory of Roman Gaul. From the middle of the third century to the beginning of the fifth,* the history of the Western Empire relates an almost unbroken succession of troubles from these bold intruders. As in Britain, so it was in Gaul. In proportion as the Roman power decayed, Rome had to withdraw her legions from the distant provinces, to defend herself at her own gates. In the same measure, the audacity of the barbarous and vigorous tribes that pressed upon her, increased. They settled more and more within her borders. The Franks became to Romanized Gaul what Picts, Scots, Saxons, were to Romanized Britain: invaders first, then masters. Their invasion, indeed, became a blessing to themselves: for it brought them out of darkness to the light of the Christian faith, though at different periods. The Franks became Christians by means of S. Remigius in the last days of the fifth century; the Saxons, through S. Augustine of Canterbury, a century later, almost to a day.†

All this introduces to us Clovis the Sicambrian, the neophyte whom the sanctity of S. Remigius won to God. But, before we conduct him to the font in Rheims Cathedral, we must have a word about his previous self.

Clovis, or Louis, for it is one and the same name,‡ was born in the year 467, and was not more than sixteen years old when he succeeded his father, Childeric, as chief of the Frankish tribe of the Sicambrians. Before he was twenty, he had formed the idea of subduing the whole, or greater part, of Gaul. In the north, he was only opposed by the feeble remains of the once great Roman power, represented by the patrician Svagrius,§ who maintained a precarious

* Guizot, *ut sup.* vol. i. p. 118.

† S. Augustine came to Canterbury, in 596, or 597. Clovis was baptized on Christmas Day, A.D. 496.

‡ Hlovis, Clodvix, Luduvin, in German Ludwig, in Latin Ludovicus. Annals are therefore wrong in calling Louis le Gros, son of Charlemagne, Louis I.

§ Son of the truly great Ætius, or Ægidius, who deservedly obtained the title, "Last of the Romans," and who defeated Attila at Chalons-sur-Marne, in 451. It was to Ætius that the Romanized

rule at Soissons. In the south, Alaric, king of the Visigoths, held the country against him. Clovis defeated Syagrius in 486; and thus put an end to the Roman dominion in Gaul. Syagrius sought refuge with Alaric: but was delivered up, and put to death by the young conqueror. Establishing himself at Soissons, Clovis and his Franks now commenced freebooters on a larger scale, and ravaged the neighbouring country, with the territory of Rheims.

From Rheims Cathedral they had taken, with other precious spoil, a sacred vessel, some say, a reliquary, of rare size and beauty. Clovis desired to have this assigned to himself, that he might restore it to S. Remigius, for whom, pagan though he was, he entertained a high respect. Indeed, they had already had friendly relations; the holy bishop had written to Clovis on hearing of his father's death, to congratulate him on his accession—making himself all things to all men, that he might gain some. On occasion of this pillage, Remigius sent a messenger to the Frank, praying that the Church treasures, or at least this one vessel, might be restored. Clovis directed the messenger to follow him and his army to Soissons. Arrived there, the booty was spread out in the midst, while his rude warriors stood around. The royal authority was not so defined in his new kingdom, that the chief could claim more than his equal share. They whose strong arms had been the instruments of his conquest were entitled to a division that might leave him little advantage in this respect. He made his request, however; and the greater part of those around him yielded to his wish. The reliquary was about to be restored to its sacred use at Rheims, when a rude soldier stepped forward, and thundering forth: "Thou shalt have only so much as falls to thee by lot!" struck the sacred vessel with his battle-axe. Clovis had sufficient self-restraint to make no reply; and the reliquary was quietly placed in the hands of the messenger, to carry back to S. Remigius.

The sequel of the story is too characteristic of the times, and of the man, to be omitted. We see the beginnings of faith, and a respect for sacred things, mingled with the

Britons, left defenceless against their savage northern neighbours, the Picts and Scots, sent their lamentable complaint, referred to above (p. 250, note).

savageness that made up his strangely unequal character. A year after, Clovis summoned all his troops to assemble for a general review, fully equipped. Passing down the ranks, he came to the man who had been guilty of this outrage. "None," said he to him, with a stern look, "has brought his arms here to-day in such bad condition as thou. Thy lance, thy sword, thine axe, are all unfit for service." Then, taking the battle-axe from him, he threw it on the ground; and, when the man stooped for it, the chieftain, wielding his own with both hands, clove his scull at a stroke, with: "Thus didst thou strike the vase at Soissons!"

Besides his general respect (at a respectful distance, indeed) for the externals of the Christian faith, another motive was ordained to lead Clovis to his conversion. He had heard of the excellent qualities of the young princess Clotildis, niece to Gondebald, King of the Burgundian Franks. This noble maiden was therefore of the same race with himself. He sought her in marriage; and, though she was a devout Christian, and the Sicambrian a half-reclaimed savage, and no Christian at all, we must suppose, in her case, some sufficient motive why she should listen to the suit. She probably yielded to the earnest request and intreaties of her uncle, who would have feared to oppose Clovis in an object he had so much at heart. Anyhow, Aurelian, a Roman Christian, whom Clovis had sent as his envoy to the Burgundian court, presented himself in the tattered garb of a mendicant pilgrim; and while Clotildis, according to the pious custom of those days, washed his feet in imitation of her Saviour, he imparted to her in a whisper the object of his coming. Clotildis, in faith and simplicity, entrusted herself to his guidance, and thus arrived safely at Villers, in the territory of Troyes. Her nuptials with Clovis were there celebrated with happy auspices, in 493, as the first glimmer of Christianity among the Franks. It is said that, before his marriage, he had promised Clotildis to embrace the true faith; which makes it, again, less surprising that she should have consented to this strange union. But, like many others before him and since, he put off his conversion from day to day; and was at length driven into the Church, it may be said, under pressure of adversity. At all events, he was better than some other

unbelieving or misbelieving husbands; for he allowed the Christian lady, who had entrusted her happiness to him, free exercise of her religion.

IV.

The birth of Clotildis' first-born was also the beginning of her trials. They who measure the favour of God to souls by the degree in which all things go smoothly with them, are short-sighted indeed. They forget that "gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation."* If this great principle was recognised by the Saints of the old law, where so many promises had reference to the "land flowing with milk and honey," to temporal rewards and prosperity, how much more true is it in the Gospel? For the Gospel inculcates the following of our Divine Lord. He is the all-perfect Exemplar for our imitation: and He was "the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity." "As *He* was," says the beloved disciple, "we also are in this world." "For whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth: and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."†

But Clovis understood little of all this. He was too much accustomed to have things as he wished, and to measure right and wrong by success or adversity, to be able to submit without reserve to the gentle yoke of a suffering Redeemer. He had still (and who can wonder?) a good deal to learn about his wife's religion. So, when his little son, instead of being a joy and a pride to him, fell sick, and was likely to die, this unbaptized savage was not only staggered, but enraged. He had allowed the child to be brought to the font, at Clotildis' entreaties; and the little Frankish prince of a span long had been named Ingomar. His baptism was to save his soul, not to prolong his life.

As we advance in the narrative, the puzzle does not diminish, why this devout Christian lady should have placed herself in (seemingly) so false a position. Why had she married Clovis? Or why not make his conversion and baptism a *sine quâ non*, before accepting his hand? But some things in the Saints' lives must be taken as springing

* Ecclus. ii. 5. † 1 John iv. 17; Heb. xii. 6.

from a special inspiration they had received. The Saints are "always admirable; not always to be imitated:" and certainly, the example of S. Clotildis can never be pleaded for a mixed marriage.

What blessing, or what happiness, can be expected, when a Catholic enters into that holy but perilous state with one who has not the gift of faith, nor the strength to live holily, which faith imparts? What true communion of soul can exist, when between them is fixed a gulf so deep and wide? Marriage is a sacramental state of life. It is also a state demanding constant sacrifice and self-denial: sacrifices of will, of tastes and preferences and little ways, that are none the less trying, because, by comparison, they *are* little. Now, how powerful an aid it is to married persons to bear their trials, and even the trials they so often are to each other—in fact, to put up with one other—when they take their turn in the confessional, and kneel side by side for Holy Communion, at those same altar-rails where they had pledged to each other their solemn troth! The remembrance of their last confession, and last Communion, nay, of the last rosary, litany, examen of conscience, in which they mutually took part, surrounded by their family circle—these are blessed preservatives against little thrusts with the sharp edge of a temper, which result, too often, in great and incurable wounds.

All this while, poor little Ingomar is dying; dying in his chrisom garment of stainless white. Some few steps more with those tiny feet, and he will be in Paradise. A grief to Clotildis; for, with all her faith in the child's assured bliss, she is still its fond mother. But what rage in Clovis—for he has taken it into his head that baptism has killed his little son, the hope and heir of his kingdom. When the child died, he harshly reproached his wife, and said: "If he had been consecrated in the name of my gods, he had not died; but, having been baptized in the name of yours, he could not live." He was probably put up to this by some of his heathen priests; for, among all opponents to the truth, there are none so determined as the ministers of a false religion. But Clotildis meekly answered: "I thank God, that He has accounted me worthy to bear a child whom He has called to His kingdom." She afterwards

had another son, whom she also procured to be baptized, and who was named Clodomir.

But here came the same trouble over again. Soon after his baptism, this second child also fell sick, and seemed likely to follow his brother. What a trial to the mother's faith, and what an increase to the father's anger, may well be supposed. But her faith was rewarded, and his anger was appeased, when the infant recovered, and lived. He lived, indeed, to become king of Orleans on the death of his father, and was afterwards killed in battle by Gondemar, King of Burgundy. His two younger sons were murdered by their uncles, Childebert, king of Paris, and Clotaire, king of Soissons,* who took more after their father Clovis than their mother's saintly example. Clodoard, the elder brother of these murdered princes, himself very young, with difficulty escaped the slaughter. He learned, through the horror of his family misfortunes, what many a king has failed to learn in his prosperity, the uncertain tenure and worthlessness of the present life; and so he laid himself out for the world to come. He cut off his long hair, that indispensable ornament of a noble Frank, in token of his irrevocable decision. First anchoret, then priest, he finally retired to a monastery which he built at Nogent, two leagues from Paris, since called after him, "S. Cloud." Here, giving himself up to good works, he ended his days piously and happily, about the year 560, and is commemorated among the Saints.

All the blood-shedding recorded above took place during the lifetime of Clotildis; weaning her more completely from the world, and adding to her meritorious afflictions.

V.

After Clodomir's recovery, an event determined the wavering mind of Clovis publicly to embrace the faith. In 496, the Allemanni, a confederation of German tribes, that had been pressing upon the Roman Empire like the Franks themselves, crossed the Rhine, and assailed the Frankish warriors who claimed relationship with Clovis. Duty and inclination alike set him in motion to succour his kindred. It was rather like two cousins who should combine to fight

* Or, Hildebert and Lothair, by the same ambiguous pronunciation that makes Clovis and Louis identical.

their cousin once removed; for we have already said that German and Frank, who have often been cutting each other's throats, from those days down to Leipsic, and to Sedan, were of the same family of nations, after all. But what are blood relationships, however near, when ambition and the greed of conquest, when mutual hates, injuries, revenges, when the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life, all come into play?

The opposing armies joined issue at Tolbiac, now Zulpich, near Cologne. The fortune of the day went against Clovis and his companions-in-arms, and he saw himself in danger of utter defeat. Then he thought of Clotildis, and of her God. The deities whom he had served had deserted him; would the Divine Object of his Christian wife's religion assist him now? It was the case of Constantine over again; a temporal victory opening a path towards an eternal crown. Clovis had promised his wife (so runs one account) that if he conquered in the fight, he would embrace her faith. Others say that Aurelian, his Christian friend and intimate counsellor, the man who had procured him the alliance with Clotildis, seeing the adverse turn of the battle, addressed him thus: "My liege lord, do but believe on that Lord of heaven, whom the Lady Clotildis is always announcing to you."

At these words, Clovis, stirred by a new emotion and a new confidence, cried aloud: "O Jesus Christ! Thou whom my queen Clotildis nameth the Son of the Living God; I have called upon my gods, and they have abandoned me; their power I disbelieve, since they aid not those who call upon them. Thee, O true God and Lord, do I invoke; if Thou willest to give me the victory over these my enemies, and I find that Thou art so powerful as is declared by the nations who believe in Thee, I, too, will believe, and will be baptized in Thy name."

Then He, who had turned the battle in favour of Josue against Amalek, and of Gedeon against the Madianites, and of the Thundering Legion against the Quadi—He who so often inclines a favourable ear to the cry of distress, even when it comes from a heart not wholly His, answered the half-faith of Clovis, even as he had complied with the doubting, presumptuous conditions on which St. Thomas

offered to believe. The Franks came off victorious. The Teuton king was slain in the fight; and his discomfited troops came submissively before the conqueror, saying: "Cease, in mercy, from further slaughter of our people; we are yours."

VI.

Now was the moment of grace, for which Clotildis had so long waited and prayed. That "man's necessity is God's opportunity," had been shown in the deliverance of the Frank from his temporal enemies. But his queen looked further, and saw into things invisible, as they always do, who live by faith. She saw Clovis, even in the moment of his triumph, surrounded by unseen foes, of whom he knew nothing, and who threatened his immortal life. It was of vital importance to seize the favourable time, and to secure his reception into the Church. This was also the moment for which S. Remigius had waited. He saw that if the rude conqueror on whom Almighty God had bestowed so signal a favour, should neglect the present call, he might never be favoured with another. For "God is not mocked:" and, though He be long-suffering, He will not wait for ever. The great dramatist has said:

> There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

No less true is it in the great affair, the work of salvation, that opportunities neglected are often withdrawn again. When Clovis, therefore, had returned in triumph to Soissons, Clotildis, ever praying for his conversion, ever on the watch to seize the favourable moment to urge it, sent a secret message to S. Remigius, entreating him to come to her aid. He came; and spoke with apostolic authority. But the enemy of mankind had still one last hold on the mind of the king, and would not be driven from it without a struggle. "I am bound," said Clovis to the archbishop, "to think of my people. They are not yet prepared to abandon their gods. I will assemble them, and repeat to them what you say."

Grace, however, had been beforehand with him; the Franks were at least as prepared as their leader. When they were assembled to hear their chief's address, before

he opened his lips, the greater part of them cried out, as with one voice: "We renounce the gods that are subject to death: we are ready to follow the Immortal God, whom Remigius proclaims." To us, enlightened by the Faith, it sounds strangely to speak of gods who could be mortal; but it must be remembered that Thor, and Woden, and Herman,* among those northern pagans, like the Hercules and Romulus of earlier idolatries, began by being heroes and successful warriors, until their deeds, and the popular acclamation, raised them to the altars of an idol worship. Their real death was concealed, as far as possible; while their apotheosis, or deification, was proclaimed to the deluded multitudes. The best instincts of man remained, after all, mute to such unworthy objects of adoration; and while every creature (so S. Paul writes to the Romans) was groaning and travailing in pain with the unsatisfied desires after a truth not known, it needed but some authentic announcement of "the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God," "Who only hath immortality," to awake the human heart, like a harp that rings responsive to a true note, and to cause it to cry out, like the Franks to Clovis: "We are ready to follow the Immortal God!"

Some three thousand of those rude warriors declared their willingness to embrace the Faith. About an equal number resisted the good example of their companions-in-arms, and remained in their paganism. These withdrew themselves from the standard of Clovis, and went to join that of Ragnacaire, the Frankish king, or chief, of Cambrai. Doubtless, he rejoiced at the acquisition of so many good swords; but he was to pay dear for them. For, not very long afterwards, came the turn of Ragnacaire, among the other Frankish princes whose power fell before that of Clovis. Defeated in battle, his hands were bound behind him by his own soldiers, probably those pagan recruits, the former deserters from their own chief; and they dragged

* Or Ermin, from whom the idol afterwards destroyed by Charlemagne in his expedition against the Saxons was called Ermin-saule, the pillar or memorial of Ermin. The Latin form is Arminius. Camden says that the Ermin Street, one of the Roman ways in Britain, is derived from the same root, which seems to have been the German name for Mercury (*Britannia*, p. 64, ed. 1610).

him before the conqueror. It is ever thus. If man, as man, is so often untrustworthy, how shall we place confidence in men who have rejected the grace of God? "He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?"* Clovis, it may well excite our indignation to relate, Christian as he then had become, treated the captive Ragnacaire as he had treated the mutinous soldier at Soissons, and slew him, together with Riquier his brother, with his battle-axe. Indeed, the waters of baptism, which we are to see poured over him, left in him still an element of savagery, that cropped up from time to time during his career, and stained the pages of his history with blood.

VII.

Meanwhile, the prayers of S. Clotildis and the exhortations of S. Remigius prevailed, not only upon Clovis and his three thousand, but upon his sister, Alboflède, whose example doubtless influenced many of the Frankish maidens and wives. We have the details of the royal baptism in the pages of Frodoard, chronicler of the Church of Rheims; for it was within the walls of S. Remigius' cathedral that the function took place. Frodoard, born at the end of the ninth century, borrowed his details from the Life of S. Remigius, by Archbishop Hincmar, who held the See some time after the Saint, and wrote his life not long before Frodoard himself. Hincmar's account may be roundly stated as being a thousand years old, and, being nearly contemporary with the event, is all the more trustworthy.

The scene is the old church at Rheims; a very different structure from the present primatial Cathedral of Notre Dame in that city. As the church of S. John Lateran, became "Mother and Mistress of all churches," because Constantine had been baptized there, so the ancient basilica at Rheims was mother and mistress of all the churches in Celtic Gaul. It was, of course, a Roman building, perhaps raised on the foundations of a pagan temple, and in architecture must have been what we now call *romanesque:* its dimensions probably not great. It had been built, quite in the opening of the fifth century, by S. Nicasius,† and was

* Ecclus. xiv. 5.

† Not, of course, to be confounded with the primitive Apostle of Rouen (*sup.* p. 248). He was, however, a martyr, A.D. 407.

therefore almost a hundred years old in 496, when Clovis was baptized in it. It lasted till the first quarter of the ninth century; when its dilapidated walls gave place to a nobler structure, built by Archbishop Ebon, in the reign of Louis le Débonnaire. But even S. Nicasius' ancient church had not been the oldest building in Rheims dedicated to the Christian mysteries. In the middle of the third century, when the pagan life of Rome had still some eighty years to run, S. Fabian, pope and martyr, had sent into Gaul those saintly bishops and missioners whose names have been given above. One of them, S. Sixtus, fixed his See at Rheims, and suffered martyrdom about the year 261. The building in which he celebrated mass and taught his flock may have been very humble and obscure; at all events, it gave place to the church of S. Nicasius, in 401—just about the date, be it observed in passing, when the Roman legions were finally withdrawn from Britain, and the lowering clouds of Picts and Scots began to threaten its broad acres and enervated peoples.

So much for the circumstances of place. And for time, we are spending Christmas Eve in the year 496, between forty and fifty years after Hengist (or those who are represented by the name) landed in Kent. It is important, as well as interesting, to note these points of contemporary chronology. They throw light, as by mutual reflexion, on the comparative degrees of civilization attained by the various rude tribes of the period, and the date at which Christianity was severally introduced among them. We should be doing scanty justice to the character of Clovis—and he has been shown to need all the palliations we can bring to bear on him—if we forgot how near was his date to the coming into Britain of those fierce pagan Saxons who drove the christianized Britains before them, and occupied their homes. That he should continue to be, apparently, as regardless of human life after his conversion as before, is only one instance among many of the strange minglings of good and evil, grace and crime, which form the paradox of individual characters, and make up the mystery of this bad world.

But we must not forespeak Clovis, nor criticize his semi-barbarous Christianity, before we have made him a Christian.

"The Bishop," says Frodoard, borrowing from Hincmar's account, "sought the king in his own apartment, quite early in the morning; that he might engage his attention before it was occupied by worldly concerns, and so might more freely communicate to him the mysteries of the Divine word. The attendants received him with great respect, and the king hastened to present himself. From thence they went together into an oratory consecrated to the blessed S. Peter, prince of the Apostles, adjoining the king's apartment. When the bishop, the king, and queen, had taken their places on the seats which had been prepared, and admittance had been given to some among the clergy, and to a number of the king's friends and courtiers, the bishop entered upon his life-giving instructions. . Meanwhile, the way is prepared from the royal palace to the baptistery; hanging and costly tapestry are hung forth, the houses on either side of the street adorned, and the baptistery dressed with fragrant boughs. The procession sets forth from the palace, headed by the clergy with the holy gospels, cross, and banners; then comes the bishop, leading the king by the hand; the queen followed, and then the populace. It is said that, as they went, the king asked the bishop whether that was the kingdom he had promised him? 'No,' answered the prelate, 'but it is the beginning of the way that leads thither.' At the moment when the king bent him over the font of life, 'Bow thy head, Sicambrian,' exclaimed the eloquent bishop; 'adore that which thou hast burned—burn what thou hast adored!'

"The king's two sisters, Alboflède and Lantéchilde, were also baptized, and at the same time three thousand Frankish warriors, beside a great number of women and children."*

VIII.

It was at this crisis of a nation's reception of the Faith, that a special miracle is reported to have been vouchsafed, to give Clovis an unmistakable token of the divine favour, over and above the intellectual convictions that had led him to the threshold of the Church. A snow-white dove, it is said, was seen to descend from Heaven, bearing in its beak

* Frodoard's *History of the Church of Rheims*, p. 43.

the *ampulla*, or vessel containing the sacred oil, for the baptismal unction of the Sicambrian.

Such alleged supernatural events come with the authority of the historical evidence, be it more or less, that attends them. They are more probable at the outset of some great movement of grace, as when the Faith is first announced in a new field of apostolic mission, than in ordinary times. If true, they are a confirmation of the truth proclaimed at the same moment; such confirmation as would, of itself, demonstrate that truth, apart from other evidence. When S. Paul, preaching at Lystra,* said to the man who had been a cripple from his birth: "Stand upright on thy feet," and the sufferer leaped up and walked, there needed no further demonstration that the Apostle spoke with a heavenly power. The multitude accepted it at once, and believed him, or rather, misbelieved him; for, having no better idea of heaven than their fabled Olympus, "they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercury, because he was the chief speaker." And so, when the volume of inspiration closes, and that of Church history opens, it has often been noted, that apostolic men have been armed, for their particular mission, with a power over the elements and the course of the world. They might not have possessed it at other times; it was imparted to them in the way of a special gift for the occasion, just as an ambassador is furnished with his credentials. Now, the confirmation of a whole tribe or nation of men in the Faith they have lately received, is precisely such an occasion as might be expected to call forth an evident sign, as was that of the ampulla.

For every miracle is, after all, a sign; and, as S. Paul declares† of the miraculous gift of tongues, it is given "for a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers." Believers do not need such signs: they have the ordinary tokens of thy truth of the Gospel, the "notes" or marks of the Church be which the Gospel is proclaimed. Though these marks are, indeed, marvellous and supernatural, yet they are not called miracles, because they are perpetual, and offer themselves constantly to observation. A miracle is something unusual, that strikes the senses as an interruption of the ordinary natural course of events, which the Church's "notes" are

* Acts xiv. 7, &c. † 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

not. On the contrary, these are centuries old, familiar to grown people and children alike, like the inscriptions on the granite rocks of Sinai, or the massive blocks of the Egyptian pyramids, to the inhabitants. Yet it is incalculably more wonderful that two hundred and twenty millions of the sons and daughters of mankind should believe precisely the same, on every jot and tittle of the Church's teaching, than that fifty dumb men should be heard to speak, or fifty blind men enabled to see. It is a far greater demonstration of divine power that dead souls, by tens of thousands, should be daily recalled to life, and reconciled to God, in the sacrament of penance, than that Lazarus should come forth from the grave in which he had lain four days. These wonderful ways of our Lord's loving omnipotence are so completely the heritage of the Church's children, that they are apt to pass by us unobserved; and we tend to sheer ingratitude from

> Our own prodigal excess
> Of too familiar happiness. *

What S. Augustine† says of the marvellous operations of nature may be applied to the miracles of Grace. "Inasmuch as those wonderful works of His, whereby He rules the entire world, and guides the created universe, have grown so cheap in our esteem by their very continuance, that scarce anyone deems it worth while to pay attention to the surprising, stupendous works of God manifested in every grain of seed; He has therefore, in His own loving kindness, reserved to Himself the performance of certain works at the fitting time, beyond the usual course and order of nature: that they to whom His daily operations have become ordinary things, may be astonished by beholding others, not greater indeed, but extraordinary. For to rule the entire world is a greater miracle than to satisfy five thousand men with five loaves. Yet no one regards the former with astonishment, while all are astonished at the latter; not that it is a greater thing, but because it is unusual."

The plain conclusion is, that when people outside the Church cavil at the miracles recorded in Saints' lives, yet acknowledge the daily, continuous marvels of Nature, and

* Wordsworth. † S. Aug. Tract. 24 in Johannem.

even (so far as they *do* acknowledge them) the continuous operations of Grace, they strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel. They accept the more wonderful thing, as a fact which it would be folly and infidelity to deny; and they reject the less wonderful thing, as a monkish legend of the dark ages, which it would be weakness and superstition to believe.

While we reason thus, the heaven-sent *ampulla*, according to a pious tradition which it is open to us to believe or not, comes through the air, like a flash of light, to the astonishment of the rude Franks, and is deposited by the dove in the hands of S. Remigius, or on the edge of the baptismal font. We might have seen it among the chief treasures of Rheims Cathedral, had we visited the spot before the French Revolution at the end of last century.* Then it was taken away, by some devoted son of Liberty and Fraternity, who perhaps used it for a butter-boat or vinegar-cruet, as Henry VIII. appropriated the great sapphire of Glastonbury, and used it as a thumb-ring. People show their zeal, with marvellous freedom, when religious or political zeal, so called, is to be evidenced by what is gainful to themselves: just as they show liberality, so called, in religion, by giving away what is not their own property—eternal Truth.

IX.

But for thirteen centuries, almost to a year, say from 496 to 1793, the sacred ampulla has excited the veneration of the faithful, and their thankfulness to God, while they regarded it as a visible token of His favour to their once heathen ancestors. If a visitor to Rheims, during those long centuries, had sneered at the notion of its being genuine (for there has been a continuous tradition of

* "The retro-choir [at Rheims] was once occupied by the treasury of the church; a precious repository of rich offerings from crowned heads, princes, prelates, and nobles. It contained a prodigious amount of masterpieces in goldsmith's work, of sacred vessels, reliquaries, and massive gold and silver images of the Blessed Virgin and divers Saints. All these things, inestimable in the eyes of religion, and of priceless value, even from an artistic point of view, melted away in the crucible of the Revolution, and only the remembrance of them is left" (*Cathedrales de France*, par M. l'Abbé Bourassé: Tours, 1843, p. 61).

sneering, as well as of faith, from the Pharisees downwards), we may suppose a pious Frenchman to have encountered him somewhat after this fashion:

"Will you have the complaisance, monsieur, to tell me why there is such a first-sight improbability in our belief of the alleged miracle? You have no difficulty, I assume, in the old Testament narrative. Well, did not an angel come and awaken the prophet Elias,* as he lay asleep in the desert, under the shadow of a juniper tree; and bid him arise and eat? When he looked, was there not at his head a hearth-cake, and a vessel of water? On what hearth, may I ask, had that cake been baked; out of whose shop or house had that vessel been taken? You cannot, of course, tell me; but does that inability discredit the narrative? Had the angel brought them in his hand to the wilderness? If it pleased the Most High to work so evident a miracle in order to feed a single prophet—who might, perhaps, have supported himself, like his great antitype the Baptist, on what the desert afforded—why is it so unlikely that a miracle should confirm the eternal truths to a newly converted multitude, the progenitors of a mighty and Catholic nation? If a vessel of water is placed in an angel's hands, to fly with it into the desert, to refresh a prophet, why not a vessel of oil by another messenger, whether dove or angel, for the most important and representative baptism in a wide province, then first added to Christendom?

"Further, monsieur, let me ask you, if the miracle is not so very improbable beforehand, then is there not substantive evidence in its favour? Have we not a time-honoured account of it, reaching back, 'beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant?' It is as certain that S. Boniface used the *saint ampoule* to consecrate Pepin Le Bref at his coronation at Soissons, as that Clovis used his battle-axe to brain Ragnacaire. The holy vessel was brought from Rheims to Soissons for the express purpose—Soissons that had, meanwhile, become the royal city of the Franks. That was a century and a half later than the baptism of Clovis. The miracle was, at that later date, believed by king, bishop, and people. How had the tradition grown up during the

* 3 Kings xix. 5, 6.

intervening space of time? Who was the fraudulent canon who had first ventured to take an ampulla in his hand, and to come before all the people at Rheims, with all France listening, and to say: 'Here is a wonderful thing I have to tell you, which you have never heard before. When Clovis was baptized, in the presence of all his people, your own great-grandfathers among them, a dove brought this ampulla, which we keep here in the Cathedral. Did your grandsires never tell you that their fathers told them this? What, none of them all? Well, that is their fault, not ours. It is true, nevertheless, and for proof of it, behold the ampulla!'

"What story gains credence, under such conditions? The canon would have been laughed at, or treated with very natural indignation; he would have had his furred tippet pulled over his ears. A process would have been instituted against him, for attempting to palm a false miracle on the popular belief. His name would have been as well known as that of the priest mentioned by S. Jerome, who forged an apocryphal narrative of S. Paul, and was degraded for it. That priest-forger's name must have lived at least two or three generations. Uncharitable people would have pointed at his great-nephew, (suppose,) and said: 'Do you know what that man's great-uncle did? Why, he forged an apostolical record.' So of the supposed canon: 'Why, he trumped up that story about the ampulla!' Therefore, monsieur, excuse my still holding to a pious and consoling belief, that has nothing about it which either pledges or endangers my faith, but which appears to me consonant to the analogy of the Divine dealings in other cases, and comes to me with the sanction of an undoubted fact in the early history of my country: endorsed by the belief of a not too credulous monarch, of a bishop who was both Saint and martyr, and by the universal assent of the hardest heads of thirteen centuries of time."

X.

The reverence which Clovis, while yet a heathen, had entertained for S. Remigius, was of course tenfold increased after his baptism. He was ready to place his dominions unreservedly under his spiritual government. Pope S. Hormisdas, at the same time, constituted Remigius legate

of the Holy See for the Frankish nation: and thus the saintly bishop was invested with full powers to settle religion according to the canons, and was blessed by seeing it flourish in answer to his prayers. Numerous miracles confirmed the faith among his new converts. He obtained the resurrection of a young maiden from the dead; and, on the other hand, though the Saint's spirit was charitable to all, yet our Lord took into His own hands the chastisement of those who tried to injure His faithful servant. Meanwhile, conscious that good books, and, especially, sound interpretations of the Scriptures, were a powerful aid to *viva voce* instruction, he set hand and pen to the work, and is therefore to be numbered among the Church's writers as well as her apostolic missionary bishops. After his death, however, literature sank to a very low ebb in the new kingdom of the Franks, until it was revived by the efforts and encouragement of Charlemagne.

We have seen that S. Remigius was consecrated to his See at an age unusually young; and, as he lived to be ninety-six, he had governed the Church in France as primate for more than seventy years when, on the 13th January, he rendered up his soul to his Lord.

The translation of his body from the church of S. Christopher, at Rheims, to a worthier shrine in the Benedictine abbey-church still called Saint Remi, was attended by a miracle. Hence that day, the first of October, has been appointed for his celebration, instead of the day when he was "born" into life eternal. This translation was made, and the festival appointed, by Leo IX., during a Council held by him in Rheims in 1049. The holy body was visited by the Archbishop of Rheims in 1646, in the presence of many witnesses, and was found entire and incorrupt.

"God give us grace," concludes Ribadeneira, "through his intercession, so to imitate him, that we may deserve to partake of his happiness."

COLLECT.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the feast of blessed Remigius, Thy confessor and pontiff, which we reverently celebrate, may increase our devotion, and promote our salvation. Through.

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SAINT DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE,

BISHOP OF ATHENS AND PARIS, MARTYR.

OCTOBER 9.

PROBABLY ABOUT A.D. 121.

THE Agora, or market-place, in Athens, like the Forum in Rome, was the scene of the city's general public life. Business of every kind was carried on there, and careless talk and amusement; all under the glorious cloudless sky of Attica, an atmosphere that seemed to sparkle with brightness and exhilaration, making it a pleasant thing for the populace to lounge about, hearing or retailing any trifle of news. For "all the Athenians, and strangers that were there," says the inspired text,* as well as the comic dramatist,† "employed themselves in nothing else but either in telling or in hearing some new thing." A fickle, light-hearted, quick-witted race, with a keen sense of beauty, in the physical order and the intellectual sphere; witness their statues, friezes, temples, porticoes and colonnades; witness their glorious dramas, choruses, orations. You might trust them unhesitatingly for a just and acute criticism of a passage in Æschylus or Sophocles, of a flowing oriental description from Herodotus, a terse historical epigram in Thucydides, a metaphor of Pericles, an indignant period of Demosthenes, closely reasoned, yet melodious withal. Only, do not trust them with your purse, nor rely on their plighted word.

"What news, what news?" twittered the busier quidnuncs, up and down the Agora, in the midst of gossip, and laughter, and chaffering, buying and selling, politics, poetry, scraps of philosophy, light-hearted scepticism, and all the

* Acts xvii. 21. † Aristophanes, *passim*.

small talk of a cultivated heathen city. "Anything fresh to-day?" drawled out, here and there, a lounging fop of the Alcibiades type, with a pet quail or dove nestling in the ungirt folds of his tunic. "Anything from the East, anything from Rome?"

"The newest thing I've heard, for many a day," said young Aristobulus to Perdiccas the tragedian, "is what yonder strange man is saying; there, look, beyond that pile of olive-baskets. Do you see him?—well, you hardly can, for he is not great of stature, and those Epicureans and Stoics are crowding so round him. I made one of his audience yesterday, for he has been disputing in the Agora these several days past. Such wonderful things, and all new!"

"You make me curious," said the other. "What is his philosophy? A new system? That's delightful. Anything in *my* way, to work up into a drama?"

"Well, yes, dramatic enough; for he says (if I caught his meaning rightly) that all the dead are one day to burst out of the earth again. Think of that! Couldn't you hammer a tragedy out of such materials? Agamemnon comes back with his gashes; Medea's children rise and shriek at their guilty mother; Clytemnestra glares on Orestes, not a pale film of a ghost, that can only frighten, but with a very material, vengeful dagger in her Amazon grasp—"

"Stay," interrupted Perdiccas, "stay a moment; I have it!" And with foot advanced, gazing into vacancy, chin resting on one hand, elbow on the other, the tragedian began to sketch out a play, on that strange, weird notion of the dead rising again. To his heathen mind the vision may have presented itself, in some of its features, as it was shown to the inspired eye of Ezechiel, more than six centuries before. With the difference, that to the prophet it was not fancy, but inspiration. To Perdiccas it was not revelation, but tragedy; dark as the "Eumenides," imaginative as the "Prometheus."

Meanwhile, there was a movement among the crowd that Aristobulus had pointed out. Men were directing their steps, in a body, towards the Hill of Mars, so well known to us as the Areopagus. The philosophers with knit brows,

the sophists with sneers, the light-hearted multitude with stare and with laughter, hitherward they come.

In the midst of them was he, whose words have made all this stir.

A weak-eyed man of no very striking presence,* except for a high and bald forehead, engraven with the lines of thought, and furrowed with suffering. A man of character, evidently; bold and uncompromising, yet of great sweetness and charity, to judge by the expression of the mouth. A man of now some fifty years, or more, if the tradition be true that he was born about the time of the Divine Nativity, and was also coeval with S. Stephen, whose blood he had helped to shed, when he kept the murderers' garments. That sanguinary deed, however, was full eighteen years ago; and, since his conversion, and retirement into Arabia, S. Paul has made heroic reparation. He has spent the interval in suffering for, and "preaching, the Faith which once he impugned." †

For it is the Apostle of the Gentiles who is the nucleus of that crowd. His burning words have excited his hearers in various degrees—some to mere gaping wonder or shallow mockery, some to anger, others to "oppositions of falsely-named science," ‡ some few, to the preludes of faith. They bring him now to the Areopagus, because that court, as the highest tribunal in Athens, a court of equity, of final appeal, was the most fitting place and audience for such unheard-of things as he had propounded.

Let us gain some idea of the locality, if we would understand one of the most remarkable human addresses ever made, and in one of the most striking of places.

S. Paul on the Areopagus. Few will read the words, and not be carried back in thought to the *chef d'œuvre* in which Raphael has attempted the scene. We have all seen it, whether in the tapestry at the Vatican, or the original cartoon, drawn for that tapestry, once at Hampton Court and now at Kensington. Or we hang it on our walls as an engraving, or have it in a family Bible. A great work of art, no doubt: but it conveys a most inaccurate idea of place and scene.

* See *Fasti Apostolici*, Appendix. "Personal appearance of SS. Peter and Paul." † Gal. i. 23. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 20.

What is the reality?

You have to figure to yourself three rocky eminences, rising from the plain of Attica, of unequal height, but very defined: the Acropolis, the Areopagus, the Pnyx. All were included within the later walls of Athens; but only the first-named had any buildings on it, to speak of. The Areopagus was scored, and is so to-day, with seats for the judges, under the vault of the Attic sky; with an open space for the accused, or whoever stood there to plead before them. The seats are roughly hewn in the limestone rock, which otherwise is nearly shapeless. Sixteen steps, likewise cut in the rock, led up to its summit from the Agora, which lies north of this low hill. Up these steps S. Paul is now conducted by one of the officers of the Court, followed by the mixed multitude, all alive to hear him propound (as they anticipate) a theory, or a worship, of some "new gods" to be added to the Hellenic mythology. It was a charge for which Socrates had suffered death.

The Pnyx, which lies westward of Mars' Hill, may be dismissed in few words; its memories are of an unmixed pagan kind. Very thrilling and momentous, however, in the history of Athens and of the neighbouring Grecian republics. It was from the *bema*, or rostrum, of that rock, rude and simply hewn, as it may be seen to-day, that the most finished, vehement, heart-stirring orations were poured forth, of which the melodious Attic Greek was ever made the vehicle. For the Pnyx had been resonant to the voice of Demosthenes; and the efforts of that impassioned pleader and powerful reasoner have only been exceeded by the highest, rarest efforts of some Christian priest, a Chrysostom or a Basil, speaking in *His* Name who, to Demosthenes, was an "unknown God."

But the Acropolis—at once the citadel and (to misuse terms) the cathedral-close of Athens—how to describe the accumulation of art-splendours and imposing religious architecture that rose upon its brow? The Parthenon, the Doric temple of Minerva, formed a tiara to its marble diadem; the crowning gem of that tiara being the statue of Victory on the pediment, driving her four-horse chariot, and looking out straight to the Piræus, the chief port of Athens, from which her navies made sail for Ægina, the Peloponnesus,

and other enemies of the State. Before the temple portico stands forth the colossal statue of Minerva Promachos, the supposed "Defendress" of her city. The image is of bronze, formed from the Persian spoils taken at Marathon. It is one of three* statues to Minerva on the Acropolis: all of them from the chisel of Phidias, at least twenty-six cubits in height. Another image, by the same master-hand, to Nemesis, the goddess of Vengeance, was formed of marbles brought into Greece by the Persians, in their confidence of victory, and left behind in their disastrous retreat. Numerous other shrines, to other demon-powers, flank the presiding temple; in a word, the City, as an Attic writer had expressed it, was "one altar, one smoke of incense and sacrifice, one holocaust to the gods."†

All these outward things appeal forcibly to the Athenian mind. They speak of war, of proud triumph, and self-reliance, national glory, and a multitude of false gods. It was this sight that moved the apostolic heart of S. Paul with a burning zeal to announce the Truth amid these splendid homes of error. "While Paul waited for" Silvanus and Timotheus "at Athens, his spirit was stirred within him, seeing the city wholly given to idolatry."‡ Who, indeed, that loved the Name and the interests of our Divine Lord, and the souls He bled to redeem, could withhold the word that is "in his heart as a burning fire, shut up in his bones?" Who could wander among those temples and theatres, with their three thousand stately, beautiful idols, could see the altar of Jupiter Olympius under its lofty colonnade, and the multitudinous superstitions of this pantheon, where "all the gods"—excepting only the True—received their incense—who could come and view these things, and not be set on fire to proclaim the Sacred Name? Here, in this very

* These were, besides the "Promachos," another colossal statue of the goddess, of ivory and gold, within the temple of Minerva "Polias," or of the city; this statue was called, pre-eminently, "Parthenos," the virgin. The third, a smaller bronze image, was entitled "the beautiful," and was the gift of the people of Lemnos. The colossal "Promachos" could be seen (says Pausanias) when the sun shone on her helmet and spear, by mariners rounding the point of Sunium, the southern promontory of Attica.

† Xenoph. *de Repub. Ath.* p. 699.

‡ Acts xvii. 16.

"Greece of Greece," there was concentrated work to be done, and the sooner Silvanus* and Timotheus come from Berœa to help him, the better. The great Apostle "disputed therefore in the synagogue with the Jews, and with them that served God:" going first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; then, extending his sphere, according to the tenor of his mission, and knocking at the lofty gates of the cultivated paganism in this its cherished home, "in the Agora, every day, with them that were there."

They now lead him up the rock-hewn steps, and place him on the narrow level space, surrounded by those aged† and distinguished citizens who bore the honoured name of "Areopagites." These have already assembled; for S. Paul's preaching during the previous days has not failed, at least, to awaken public curiosity. Moreover, it is a question of religion, therefore under the special cognisance of this high court. Dionysius the Areopagite is seated there, with his compeers. We may be sure our acquaintances, Perdiccas and Aristobulus, are among the audience; but we are not further concerned with them, only to hope they may have been among the few converts made by the Apostle.

And now, imagine that you stand there, by S. Paul's side. Study the scene awhile, before he opens his lips. The foreground, a half circle of grave and thoughtful faces—the judges of the Areopagus were not mere newsmongers: they formed an audience that Pericles or Demosthenes might have addressed, with confidence that their arguments would be weighed, and appreciated. Behind these, a curious multitude of "the general," to whom such words are very much "as caviare." The sea of heads, as far as the rock allows room, hides from the Apostle's eyes that part of Athens which is built in the plain. To his left, however, beyond the Agora, rise the columns of the Poikile Stoa, or Porch of Various Colours, a sort of national picture-gallery, dedicated to the achievements of the Republic. Nestling under Mars' Hill, but almost concealed from view, is the

* "They that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a commandment from him to Silas and Timothy, that they should come to him with all speed, they departed" (Acts xvii. 15).

† Every member of the Court was to be sixty years old, at least, as a condition for belonging to it.

Temple of the Furies—an unlovely, yet in some ways wholesome worship, that brings, after a heathenish fashion, a shadow of judgment to come, over the gay inhabitants of this bright inspiriting clime. But before him, ay, right in front, where he stands facing the East, rises the Acropolis. Minerva's polished helm and shield are flashing the evening sun on the face of the Apostle of truth.

One moment yet, to complete the picture: it enters into the address he is about to deliver. The breath of Divine inspiration breathes where it will; yet at times it would seem to take its course in the channel of outward surroundings. So the prophet Jeremias* was sent down by inspiration to the potter's house; and, while he mused on the absolute control of the workman over the clay, the word of the Lord came to him, and bade him preach to Israel the Divine supremacy over all His creatures. So, while we read S. Paul's words, embalmed for us in the Acts of the Holy Apostles, we cannot but recal the scene that presented itself to his eyes at the moment. Like all who walk by faith, he "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." To a heart in union with God, the sights of nature represent the verities of grace: "for the invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."†

Beyond the circuit of the city walls, the plain of Attica, dotted and laced about with gray olive plantations, undulated smoothly up to the spurs of the surrounding mountains. Mount Hymettus lay to the south-east, murmurous with its bees, whose honey rivalled that of Hybla, and was rivalled, if you will believe Horace, by that of his own Sabine farm. North-west, lay Mount Parnes; north-east, again, the marble quarries of Pentelicus; while through the defiles of that last mountain wound the rocky road, not safe from brigands or broken knees, that led to Marathon. Behind S. Paul, that is, to the West, extended the silver sea-line of the gulf of Salamis, now transmuted into evening gold. Rising above it, robed in the changeful purple and rose-tints which make up the almost everyday costume of the isles of Greece, was to be seen the rocky outline of Salamis itself. Earth, water, and every green thing, and

* Jer. xviii. 2—6. † Romans i. 20.

the clear sky above, and the matchless creations of man below.

Then came the immortal words. May we, without mere fancifulness, suppose a running commentary to have passed through the minds, and partly overflowed on the lips, of his hearers?

"Men of Athens"—thus the great Apostle opened his commission—"I consider you to be in all respects greatly given to a reverential awe of superhuman powers."*

"Ay?" thought Philostratus, a leading Epicurean in the city, "and why should men be affected by such reverential awe, when the superhuman powers have no concern in human actions?" Then he muttered to himself the sublime but dreadful lines of Lucretius:

> "From our low cares remote, unknowing pain
> Or peril, self-endowed, the Power Supreme
> Nought needs of us; nor any act of good
> Wins Him to bless, nor evil moves to ire."†

"Superhuman powers—hm!" murmured Crito, a Stoic; "that is to say, Nature, or Fate. If he means anything more personal, he is as much at sea as the ignorant multitude."

At the same moment, Dionysius was musing with himself, as the words fell on his ears; for they re-awakened within him the former stirrings of soul of which he had been conscious during the Crucifixion of the Lord. Then, amid the portentous darkness, that had shrouded the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour, he had cried out, in wondering awe: "Either the God of nature is suffering, or the frame

* Cornelius a Lapide *in loco*, especially the note from Kuinoelius, for this meaning of S. Paul's phrase δεισιδαιμονεστέρους. He was far from accusing his hearers of "superstition," in a bad sense, but, on the contrary, giving them all credit for reverence, even for the Unknown. Thus he would lead them, on their own showing, to the full knowledge of and belief in Him, to whom, with a vague reverential feeling, they had erected an altar, though acknowledging they knew Him not.

† "Divina potestas,
Semota a rebus nostris, sejunctaque longe:
Nam privata dolore omni, privata perîclis,
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nil indiga nostri,
Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur irâ."

(Words lately quoted in the House of Commons, on a memorable though not a joyful occasion.)

of nature is being dissolved!" Now, with his wife Damaris, and some few others, he is to be a disciple of the great exposition of truth, and will respond to its personal appeal.

"For, as I passed by," continued the Apostle, "and observed the objects of your worship, I found an altar, on which was inscribed:

TO AN UNKNOWN GOD."

"And what has he to object to that?" mused an Academician of the later School, listening with grave attention. "Forasmuch as all is next to unknown, and the strongest light thrown on what lies beyond the senses is twilight—how should GOD—or gods—be He One, be they many—be other than unknown?"

A question, to which the only sufficient answer was a Revelation. The natural world, indeed, was witness to the natural mind of man,* enough to confute atheism, and to rebuke heathen sin. And yet, how dark and how meagre those outlines became, to such as would not use them to "follow on, and know the Lord!"

Then, having secured attention by the courtesy of his opening address, by referring to what he had remarked in their favour during his brief time in Athens, the Apostle proceeded to unfold his wonderful message.

It was not "new gods," as they supposed, that he came to proclaim; but new relations with the One and Only Creator. They were already "feeling after Him" in the darkness; let them now supplement what they knew, or guessed at, by the fuller manifestation of Himself, whereby He commanded all men to repent, and to believe. Their own poets† and philosophers had told them, truly, that man is the offspring of a Divine Father. He, Paul their guest, now came to tell them that their divine sonship was twofold, by Creation, and by Redemption. He bade them have worthier thoughts of Him who had become their heavenly Father, than to suppose that Himself or His attributes could

* Acts xiv. 16; Romans i. 19, 20.

† Aratus and Cleanthes; the former, a Cilician poet, and therefore a countryman of S. Paul.

be adequately represented by graven image, however stately or beautiful; nay, though the highest efforts of man's genius or skill—of a very Phidias—had been expended thereon. The lofty, glorious statue of their own supposed goddess, Athene, then full in view before them, with its colossal height, majestic proportions, triumphant memories—or that other venerated image at Ephesus, the Diana which was said to have fallen down from Jupiter*—these were no true representations to convey to man's soul a perception of the nearness, the all-embracing Providence and Love, who now summoned them, through his lips, to a penitential sorrow for their personal offences against Himself. Whether they had transgressed the moral law, of which they had a witness in their hearts, or whether they were conscious of having neglected their opportunities of a fuller acquaintance with their Creator, in either case they had to repent, and turn to Him.

Hitherto, the attention given to the Apostle had been unbroken. Many of the Areopagites had already seen through the foul or flimsy legends and mythology, which had been woven by poets into an entangling web of falsehood. These men, of more thought, regarded Athene and the rest as symbols of a deeper teaching that lay beyond. Or, they held them to be mere popular forms, that might engage the unthinking multitude, and so be tolerable, even useful, for public worship, to maintain something like public order. But the speaker soon got beyond their ken, and propounded to them that "wisdom of God," which was "to the Gentiles, foolishness."†

For he went on to say, though in guarded language, tempering the light of supernatural truth to their unprepared vision, that man, whether revelling in their own bright Attic soil and air,‡ or bound in the icy chains of Thrace and the Cimmerii, or burning under the fierce suns of Egypt, would

* Acts xix. 35. A similar belief attached to a very ancient and venerated image of Minerva, of olive wood, preserved in the temple of Erectheus on the Acropolis.

† 1 Cor. i. 23.

‡ "Sparkling Athens" was their favourite epithet for their native plain and city, and they ever listened with pleasure when it was quoted by orator or poet. It was fully merited by the pure atmosphere and light calcareous soil (*τὸν ἀργῆτα Κόλωνον*, Œdip. Colon).

be summoned hereafter to the Judgment-seat of God, to render an account of his deeds.

Here, again, his hearers were prepared to go along with the Apostle, a certain way. The original belief in a judgment to come, doubtless proclaimed by Noe and the patriarchs, embalmed in the sublime utterances of Job, had lingered, at least in the old mysterious and unchanged land of the Nile. And Egyptians were perhaps to be found in sunny Athens, as they certainly had been imported into imperial Rome; with their staid and wholesome belief of the disembodied soul ferried over to the island of doom, and there weighed in the balances of unerring Justice.

But now came the point, when the persuasive teacher, with that varied learning he was so skilfully wielding, and the heartfelt utterances to which he was moulding their harmonious Greek, was to become in their eyes altogether another man.

A fool! an utterly insane ranter of impossibilities! Listen to him no longer—"Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad!" *

> Beware, beware
> His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
> Weave a circle round him thrice,
> And close your eyes with holy dread:
> For he on honey-dew hath fed—

With some such quotation from dithyrambic poet or tragic chorus did the younger and light-hearted of the Apostle's audience treat his earnest statement of Christian truth; as if bent merely on capping his verses from Aratus and Cleanthes. The graver heads of the Areopagus, meanwhile, mused somewhat after this sort:

"If he is not come to introduce new deities, at least he has nothing to propose to us, but this wild superstition about an impossible rising again! Anastasis? Well, if she be a rival to Athene, it is an impious assertion; and, if nothing so definite, it is the baseless fabric of a vision!"

Thus, "when they had heard of the resurrection of the dead, some indeed mocked, but others said: We will hear thee again concerning this matter. So Paul went out from among them." †

* Acts xxvi. 24. † Acts xvii. 32, 33.

In the ark of Noe, the divinely-appointed refuge from the flood, "a few, that is, eight souls, were saved;"* for they believed the warning, and prepared against the deluge. So, when the word of God sounded from Mars' Hill, to the overthrow of Mars and all his fellow-idols, "certain men adhering to [S. Paul] did believe; among whom was also Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."†

How many others? our minds naturally ask. Who could remain blinded to a light so clear, so genial, so consoling? "Rise again?" O blessed hope! Then, these poor eyes, and limbs, this heart and brain, the ready servants of my immortal spirit, are not finally to rot, and to crumble, and pass away?

> I shall not wholly die—my spark of fire
> Will yet escape, and mount above the pyre!

So sang poor old, easy-going Horace, whatever he may have meant by it: earthly posthumous fame, most likely. So he sang, in one of his better moods—sixty or seventy years before the Apostle, on the Areopagus, announced the other half of the great truth, of which the Epicurean Flaccus could but dimly guess a portion. The immortality of the soul would remain a thing incomplete, without the resurrection of the body. But "the works of God are perfect;"‡ with Him is nothing fragmentary nor lacking. Man, the complex being—body and soul allied together, even as he stood forth in Paradise under the hand of his Creator, so shall he stand in the valley of Josaphat§ before the eye of his Lord and Judge. "I know"—exclaimed the seer and Saint of Edom, in ecstasy of faith and love—"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God."‖

Side by side with Dionysius, on the rough hewn seats of that open-air tribunal, was many another Areopagite. Dwelling in the same street with Damaris was many another Athenian woman. The words of Paul were caught from lip to lip; his name rang through the city; through the Porch

* 1 S. Peter iii. 20. † Acts xvii. 34.
‡ Deut. xxxii. 4. § Joel iii. 2, 12, 14. ‖ Job xix. 25, 26.

of the Stoic, through the Garden of Epicurus, among the worshippers who were bending before some of Athens' three thousand images, offering incense to Athene, to Erectheus, to Theseus, to "The Unknown God," who was to remain unknown. The news was blown abroad, like thistledown, this way and that, among the newsmongers, quidnuncs, loiterers, triflers, of what this stranger had uttered on the Hill of Mars. Why, then, so poor a gleaning, so mere a handful, from what should have been a wide and wealthy harvest?—Why?

Indifference, agnosticism, absorption in present interests and pleasure, with that deep-seated moral corruption which dulls the heart, enfeebles the will, saps the soul's vital powers, when it does not actually stop the ears. "Faith cometh by hearing;" so likewise comes the responsibility of half-listening without even half-obeying.

"So Paul went forth from among them." Not, however, before he had consecrated his neophyte Dionysius—all things being duly observed, as with S. Ambrose—a missionary bishop over this unpromising diocese.

More than probably,* if we would witness the good confession, later on, and the glorious martyr-triumph of the Areopagite, we should have to transfer ourselves to the old Gaulish city of *Lutetia Parisiorum*, a small island-construction on the river *Senum*. It is about as unlike the modern Temple of fashion and frivolity, the great Vanity Fair that dominates France, as place can be. But there is a hallowed eminence near it; a spot from which, even to-day, you can see the beautiful towers of the Benedictine abbey of S. Denis, that rise, also outside Paris, in another direction. That hill, for many centuries, has been named the *Mons Martyrum*, and still answers to the name, *Montmartre*. It has known a varied history; and, quite lately, the question was agitated with vehemence, whether it should belong to our Lord's

* A non-Catholic writer so cautious as Guizot assumes, without question, the truth of the legend that S. Dionysius the Areopagite is the S. Denis of Paris. See above, on S. Remigius. There is, indeed, no rival claimant for the honour; whereas, regarding the writings attributed to the Areopagite, many writers of authority have given them to an otherwise obscure Dionysius of the fourth or fifth century.

Sacred Heart, or to an infidel Commune. But the first chapter of that long history has always been quoted as the martyrdom of S. Dionysius on the spot, together with his companions, SS. Rusticus and Eleutherius, in the reign of Adrian, about 121 A.D.

The martyr bishop is said to have been, at that time, in the hundred-and-tenth year of his life. He had left Athens for Rome, to visit the tombs of the Apostles, S. Peter, and his own master in the faith, S. Paul. Also he desired to render homage to Pope S. Clement—himself near the day of his own exile and martyrdom, which occurred in the reign of Trajan. From Athens came also with S. Dionysius five companions, SS. Saturninus, Marcellus and Lucian, with the two above-named. These three, now specified, were detached, one after the other, on the way through Gaul, to evangelize Spain, Aquitaine, and Beauvais. Paris was to hear the voices of the remainder, especially of S. Denis, proclaim the sublime and powerful truths he had heard on the Areopagus. Nor can it be doubted, though his message earned for him the martyr's crown, that it was delivered to the men of Paris with the same zeal and wise adaptation, with the apostolic affectionateness and Christian courtesy, that had characterized his great teacher, the Doctor of the gentiles.

COLLECT.

Look upon our weakness, Almighty God: and forasmuch as the burden of our [evil] actions weighs us down, may the glorious intercession of blessed Dionysius, Thy martyr and pontiff, defend us. Through our Lord.

SAINT LUKE,

EVANGELIST AND MARTYR.

OCTOBER 18.

A.D. PERHAPS ABOUT 70.

On the rough deck he stood; where merchant-bales
Lay cumbrous, pil'd for marts in far-off Tyre.
An idol-form, Poseidon, or the Twins,
The vessel's figure-head, furrows the brine
As eastward plough they, o'er the midland sea.
Unmeet surroundings for a man of God,
Whose potent word still aims to assail strong-holds
Of Mammon, Belial, and the siren power
Worshipp'd within the portals of that fane
At Paphos, now emerging* from the waves
Upon their sight—his, and the comrade's true
Who leaves him not, while his chain clanks in Rome:
Luke, the physician from Troy's† classic shore.

Aged he is, by sufferings; more by toil
Than time—yet sixty winters are nigh sped
Since he saw light in Tarsus: that great year
When Yule stars melted into Bethlem's dawn,
While the first martyr wail'd his infant cry.

Still in their sail full-blown the west wind sings;
Paphos is vanishing; he, the cross-nail'd man,
Not bound, as once Ulysses to the mast,

* Ἀναφανέντες τὴν Κύπρον, Acts xxi. 3.
† *Ibid.* xvi. 8, 11.

But nailed on the sweet Cross of his Lord,
Mourns for his fellow-men, siren-beguiled,
Whom Paphian rites toward Acheron have sped.

To loving memory rise, ere Cyprus pass,
Comrade and friend* of unforgotten years!
Thus Paul, to the companion at his side:
"Luke, ere I found and gained thee to Christ,
From yonder open strand† we launch'd our keel,
The 'son of consolation,' with myself—
Our Cypriote labours o'er; for Perga bound.
Throughout yon island had we borne His Name
Who gracious call'd us to the truth and word:
Some men had listened, ponder'd some, or scoff'd;
Deem'd us their nation's gods, or howl'd us down—
False Elymas there assail'd the truth in vain,
While the Proconsul bow'd his thoughtful head.‡
From Salamis e'en to Paphos, such the tale.
Now, in that Salamis we may not view
While we steer southward, Barnabas yet lives,
Prelate, Apostle; more—a prayerful Saint:
And my soul yearns to greet him once again.
Why parted we? Though Mark, the sister's son,
Shrank from his Lord's work on the first essay;
And nature's voice pleaded o'er much, methought,
With Barnabas, to have Mark forth of Antioch§
And see their isle once more—did I then err?
My strong desire for labourers like-minded,
Men still at home, because in exile ever,
Was it too scantly steep'd in such calm thought
And self-renouncement, as must temper zeal?
Some touch, perhaps, was there, o' the former Saul,
Of him, who toward Damascus—"
"Father, nay,"
Luke reverent answer'd—"other guise I read
That difference, long forgot: great loss it were,
Had ye both journeyed on one mission path—"

* Acts ix. 27; xi. 25, 26.

† Salamis or Arsinoë, the modern Famagusta, is the only real port in the island; other localities being mere open roadsteads.

‡ Συνετὸς ἀνήρ, Acts xiii. 7. § *Ibid.* xv. 35—39.

"The Zeus and Hermes of the Lystrans' fable!"*
Broke-in a youthful neophyte, swift of speech,
Who laugh'd amidships at the dolphins' play,
Nor fear'd the great Evangelist to dumb—
(For youth is confident)—yet half abash'd
'Neath the grey mildness of Paul's steadfast eye:

"Great loss 'twere," Luke resum'd, "while far and near
Waves the wide harvest, had ye reap'd abreast;
John Mark in Cyprus gathers,† doubt it not,
And I, perchance, had ne'er accosted thee!
So‡ the Lord bade, that Cephas ask no more
What future waited him He lov'd; bade each
Follow his call—separate, yet ne'er disjoin'd,
Erewhile to meet, where all in Him are one."

Thus while they commune, from the sheltering isle
More widely steers their bark; Cilicia's heights
Blow them hoarse hail, as Cyprus melts from view;
Till, where Olympus§ rose, is ocean tumult:
And many a wine-dark billow's foaming strength
With typhon-howlings‖ of Euroclydon
Buffets the merchant-ship, ere Tyre they see,
Or their firm footsteps dint the Pœnic sand.

COLLECT.

May Luke Thy holy Evangelist intercede for us, O Lord, we beseech Thee; who for the honour of Thy Name ever bore in his body the mortification of the Cross. Through our Lord.

* Acts xiv. 11. † S. Matt. xii. 30. ‡ S. Chrys. *Hom.* xxxiv. 1.

§ The classic mountain in Thessaly was one of several bearing the same name. Mount Olympus in Cyprus runs east and west through the greater part of the island, and must have formed the northern boundary of the journey of SS. Paul and Barnabas from Salamis to Paphos.

‖ Acts xxvii. 14.

SAINT BEDE,

MONK AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH.

OCTOBER 29.

A.D. 762.

In our quick and shifting age, when few have leisure, if they have earnestness, to penetrate the surface of anything, it is startling to hear of a man who spent no fewer than eighty-three years out of a life of ninety, all in one and the same cloister, studying, teaching, praying. What a constant, even round; and running so smoothly! It is like the swift silent wheel of some perfectly adjusted mechanism; only that the machine is set and kept in motion by an ever-present human will. What a calm resolution, we say to ourselves, as we read that simple record! What an accumulation of learning, too, did he slowly draw to himself, during all those years. Above all, what a steady increase of grace, and life-long ripening for the full unclouded sight of God! "He asked life of Thee, and Thou hast given him length of days, for ever and for ever."* To begin to serve his Creator at seven years old, and only leave off serving Him at ninety, in the self-same place, and the self-same rule of daily life, when the death-bed and the last sigh wound up the glorious account—this is a rare chronicle indeed.

It seems to reproduce, in England of the eighth century, those wonders of aged sanctity, those silver crowns of dignity,† that shone in the deserts of Egypt during the third

* Psalm xx. 5.

† Prov. xvi. 31. "Old age is a crown of dignity, when it is found in the ways of justice."

and fourth; turning that land of darkness into a Gessen of Christian light. We find hardly a parallel, except in S. Paul the First Hermit, Patriarch of all anchorites who lived apart, and the great S. Antony, who, even to extreme old age, showed the path of sanctity to those who live in communities.

Yet even such was the life of the Benedictine monk of Jarrow. He is popularly known as the "Venerable Bede," for a reason that we shall see directly; but he is a canonized Saint, all the while; and that is his true title in the Church of God.

Bede was a Saxon of the Saxons. He came of the race of fierce invaders, who held England for a century and a half before they were converted by S. Augustine. That conversion had been effected about half a century before S. Bede was born; and meanwhile, Saxon England was becoming prolific in saintly souls, and houses of religion. Let us hope it is no arrogance to say that the northern races are distinguished by a gravity and earnestness, which stands them in good stead, when once their thoughts are turned to religion. When Thor, and Woden, and Freya, had been toppled from their idol-pedestals, only to be harmlessly commemorated in the names of our week-days —when every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday morning saw the priest stand at the altar of sacrifice, and offer the "clean oblation,"*—then Anglo-Saxon Britain made ample amends for "the times of this ignorance"† that God had borne so patiently. There was something very simple and loyal about that early English Christianity; more filial to the Holy See than the fierce Norman afterwards proved himself; more plainly mortified in life, if less magnificent and feudal, than the baron-bishops, whose episcopal gloves looked sometimes rather too like the gauntlets of their brother-barons.

It is touching to hear one good monk recount the history of another. The points he selects for notice imply his own personal imitation of what he holds up for the reverence of the faithful. The following brief account of S. Bede's

* Mal. i. 11.
† Acts xvii. 30.

life* is so simple, yet so suggestive, that, like a delicate flower, to touch or re-arrange it would be to spoil.

"Beda, priest and monk of the monastery of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul† in England, at seven years old was committed by his parents to the tuition of Benedict, Abbot of the aforesaid monastery, to be brought up by him.‡ Here he made wonderful progress, and the light of his learning shone most brightly. In his nineteenth year, he was made deacon, and priest at thirty; from which time to the last hour of his life,§ he ceased not to teach and to write. For, as he acknowledged, nothing was sweeter to him than diligently to read and expound the Sacred Scriptures. There was never any slothful repose about him, nor intermission to his studies: he was ever reading, ever writing, teaching ever, and praying; for he knew that one who loves wholesome learning can easily overcome carnal ills. Hence, he would never consent to undertake the office of Abbot, when it was offered to him, lest the charge of the Community should distract and draw him away, for however short a time, from converse with this Rachel of his fond predilection.

"He usually derived great fervour and compunction from study; so that often, while he read and taught, he would weep copious ardent tears. Hence, after reading and study, the holy doctor would betake himself devoutly to prayer; as knowing that insight into the Scriptures is gained rather by Divine grace than by any power of our own.

"His instructions were so highly prized, that Pope

* From the Supplement to the Roman Breviary, for the English Saints. It would appear (unless any more probable supposition is given) to be from the pen of Alcuin.

† They were, in fact, two monasteries, both founded by S. Bennet Biscop; that of S. Peter at Weremouth, in 674, and that of S. Paul at (or near) Jarrow, four years after. Both, of course, were Benedictine. "Such a harmony," says Butler, "subsisted between the two houses, that they were often governed by the same Abbot, and called the same monastery of SS. Peter and Paul."

‡ S. Bennet Biscop himself, who died in 690.

§ The age attained by S. Bede is variously stated. Mabillon makes him to have been only sixty-two; others even less. But Alcuin, and Bishop Tanner after him, are the authorities for the greater age here given. In that case, he must have lived thirty years after writing his Church History.

Sergius wrote from Rome to his abbot, Ceolfrid, exhorting him to make no opposition to Beda, the servant of God, being despatched to the tombs of the Apostles; forasmuch as his presence would prove very advantageous and necessary to the Church of God, on intricate questions concerning the faith. He composed, moreover, many excellent treatises on all the 'liberal' arts. He acquired an all-but perfect knowledge of the Greek tongue, and was not unacquainted with Hebrew. He had many eminent disciples, whom he incited, by his diligence and example, to the love of the Scriptures, and that with incredible fervour.

"Nor was it only in learning that he raised his disciples to eminence, but in religious sanctity; a thing of greater moment.

"Beda was of a proportionable stature; composed in gait; his voice clear and elevated; eloquent of speech; of a comely countenance, and gravity united with a certain pleasantness of aspect. Hence, while affable to good and devout persons, he was feared by the proud and reckless.

"At length, after much sedulous labour in writing and instruction, his whole soul yearning after the heavenly country, he fell into sickness; yet, though for seven continuous weeks before his death he was afflicted with indigestion, and breathed with difficulty, he intermitted nothing of his literary occupations: but during all that time, besides duly reciting the Psalter, was still engaged in them, and in translating the Gospel of S. John into English.

"On the Tuesday before our Lord's Ascension, the Community was summoned, and he was communicated and anointed. Then, giving to all of them the kiss of peace, he begged of each to make a memento of him thereafter. Finally, on Ascension Day, being laid on a hair-cloth, over against the oratory where he had been wont to pray, with senses unimpaired and gladsome countenance, he pronounced the 'O Rex gloriæ;'* and, having ended that antiphon, breathed forth his soul, on the twenty-seventh of May,† in the year of our Lord seven hundred and sixty-two.

* The antiphon for the Magnificat on the Feast of the Ascension.

† The day on which he is mentioned in the Roman martyrology. "Certain congregations of the Benedictine Order have long kept his office on the 29th of October, perhaps on account of some translation. On the same day it is celebrated at present in England."

Straightway was there a fragrance of the greatest sweetness, so that all who were present deemed themselves to be in Paradise. Ninety years had he lived, of which he spent eighty three in the monastery. The smaller treatises of this most learned man were held, even in his lifetime, to be of such authority, that by the injunction of ecclesiastical prelates* they were publicly read in churches and assemblies of the faithful. Hence, inasmuch as they could not, during his lifetime, style him 'Saint,' in reading the title of his homilies, they called him 'Venerable:'—a title which, once inserted in his works, could never afterwards be effaced."

But the details of S. Bede's last hours are given still more graphically in a letter from one of his disciples, the monk Cuthbert, who was afterwards abbot of Jarrow. Some extracts shall be here given.

"Your letter gave me much satisfaction; finding in it, what I greatly desired, that masses and prayers are diligently said by you for Beda, the beloved of God, our late father and master. For the love I bear him, I send you in few words an account of the manner in which he departed this world. . [During his last sickness,] he daily read lessons to us his scholars; the rest of the day he spent in singing psalms; he also passed all the night, awake, in joy and thanksgiving; except when interrupted by a brief slumber. But on awaking, he repeated his accustomed exercises, and ceased not to give thanks to God, with his hands extended. O truly happy man! He sang that sentence of S. Paul: 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' and much more out of Holy Writ. . He said, in English: 'No man is too wise to consider what good or evil he has done, before the inevitable departure hence;' that is, to give a sufficient examen to the state of his soul before his death. . When he came to that word [in the Ascension antiphon], 'leave us not [orphans],' he burst into tears, and wept much: and an hour after, he began to repeat the same anthem he had begun; and we, hearing it, grieved with him. By turns we read, and by turns we wept; nay, we were always weeping, even as we read. In such joy we passed the fifty days; and he rejoiced much, and

* One account states that this was enacted by the decree of a provincial Council.

gave God thanks. because he merited to be so infirm.* He often repeated, that 'God scourgeth every son whom He receiveth,' and much more out of the Scripture. . He passed all that day [the Tuesday], pleasantly, and dictated in school; † saying now and then: 'Go on quickly; I know not how long I shall hold out, and whether my Maker will soon take me away.' To us, he seemed to know very well the time of his departure. He spent the night awake, in thanksgiving. On Wednesday morning, he bade us write speedily what he had begun. After this, we made the procession,‡ according to the custom of that day, walking with the relics of the Saints, till the third hour. Then one of us said to him: 'Most dear master, there lacketh still one chapter. Will you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions?' He answered: 'It is no trouble; take your pen, and write fast.' He did so. But at the ninth hour, he said to me: 'Run quickly, and bring all the priests of the monastery to me. .' They all wept at his telling them, they should no more see his face in this world; but rejoiced to hear him say: 'It is now time for me to return to Him who made me, and gave me a being, when I was nothing. I have lived a long time; my merciful Judge most graciously foresaw and ordered the course of my life for me. The time of my dissolution draws near. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. Yes; my soul desires to see Christ my king in His beauty.' Many other things he spoke to our edification; and spent the rest of the day in joy, till the evening. The young scholar above-named, who was called Wilberth, said to him: 'Dear master, there is still one sentence not written.' He answered: 'Write quickly.' The young man said: 'It is now done.' He replied: 'You have well said; it is at an end: all is finished. Hold my head, that, while seated, I may call upon my Heavenly Father.'"

* See the corresponding expression of S. Paul, Phil. i. 29. S. Bede thanked God for the *favour* He had granted him, in the weakness and suffering that made him more like to his Lord. This is what spiritual writers call the third and highest degree of humility.

† This seems, from a previous passage, to have been the Saint's dictation of his version of S. John's Gospel into Saxon, which he only carried as far as c. vi. v. 9. Or perhaps his Collectanea from S. Isidore's book of notes.

‡ The procession of the Rogations, on the eve of Ascension Day.

Even the fragments here given from this good monk's epistle supply a marvellously touching picture of one who, in the best sense, died in harness. Here is no mere *dilettante* man of learning; no trifling antiquarian, no selfish or self-sufficient *litterateur*. He has acquired, and that laboriously, all that they possess, and much more. But he has wielded it to a nobler end than a learned curiosity, pride of knowledge, or intellectual display. He has traded with his talents, as "a good and faithful servant;" using them for His glory, and to promote His cause on earth, who "gave him a being when he was nothing," who "foresaw and ordered the course of his life." And so, in joy, and in the patient communication of his great treasures to after-times, he passes away to "see Christ, his king, in His beauty."

Well might this great and single-hearted man speak of himself as the disciple of the Sancta Sophia, "the wisdom that is from above:" in terms more applicable to his life-long holy obedience than to the Solomon of a glorious morning promise, and a darkly clouded sunset. Well might he "magnify the Lord," the giver of "every best and perfect gift," while he thus rehearsed the great things He had done for him: "God hath given me . . to conceive thoughts worthy of those things that are given me: because He is the guide of wisdom, and the director of the wise. For in His hand are both we, and our words, and all wisdom, and the knowledge and skill of works. For He hath given me the true knowledge of the things that are: to know the disposition of the whole world, and the virtues of the elements; the beginning, and ending, and midst of the times, the alterations of their courses, and the changes of seasons; the revolutions of the year, and the dispositions of the stars; the natures of living creatures, and rage of wild beasts; the force of winds, and reasonings of men, the diversities of plants, and the virtues of roots, and all such things as are hid and not forseen, I have learned: for wisdom, which is the worker of all things, hath taught me."*

We can all carry with us, from this engaging picture, one lesson of urgent importance; the need of uniting work and prayer. It is not to make an epigram, nor as a kind of half

* Wisd. vii. 15—21.

paradox, that Dom Mabillon says, of this great and holy man: "Who ever applied himself to study every branch of literature, and also to teach others, more than Beda? Yet who was more closely united to Heaven, by pious and religious exercises? To see him pray, says an ancient writer, one would have thought he left himself no time to study; and when we look at his writings, we wonder he could have found time to do anything but write." Both are accounted for by the diligence with which, during his one long working-day, he stored up *rest* for himself in the Eternal "sabbath-keeping" that remaineth for the people of God.

S. Bede's mortal remains underwent successive removals. He was buried in S. Paul's church in Jarrow, "where a porch on the north side bore his name." Nearly five centuries after that, in 1020, the relics were conveyed to Durham, and laid in S. Cuthbert's shrine. An hundred and thirty years later, they were again taken up, and "inclosed in a rich shrine of curious workmanship, adorned with gold, silver, and jewels." Lastly, at the event which, by a condescending euphony, is called "the change of religion" in England, the shrine was plundered of its costly dross; but the real treasure it contained seems to have been re-buried, or perhaps left undisturbed. A rare circumstance, in the evil days when S. Thomas of Canterbury was summoned, by a jocular impiety, to appear before Henry VIII.'s Commissioners; and, on his non-appearance, was pronounced a traitor, and his dust scattered to the winds.

COLLECT.

O God, Who dost glorify Thy Church by the learning of blessed Bede, Thy Confessor and Doctor: mercifully grant to Thy servants, that they may ever be enlightened by his wisdom, and aided by his merits. Through our Lord.

SAINT JOHN,

APOSTLE, EVANGELIST, AND MARTYR IN WILL.

DECEMBER 27.

A.D. 100.

DOMENICHINO, the celebrated painter, has given us a work of art, beautiful indeed, but ill representing the reality. He has portrayed the Beloved Disciple as a fresh fair youth with hyacinthine locks, having his eagle by his side, and hearkening

> With head uprais'd, and lips apart,
> Like monument of Grecian art,

to the voice of the Apocalypse. Now, painters and poets have ample indulgence in a kind of artistic licence; they may draw largely upon their imagination. But Domenichino has here exceeded. His eye was filled, perhaps with a comely form that might have done as well for some mythological personage: then he added the eagle, and called the piece "Saint John."

Far other is the actual Apostle, to whom those awe-inspiring mysteries were communicated; he, who was called to see so far into the things of Eternity, that it would surely need a special grace of strength to uphold him still in the flesh.* He, when the Lord, on Whose breast he had leaned at the last sad supper, revealed Himself on His glory-throne, "fell at His feet, as dead." † Before that, moreover, he had stood at the foot of the Cross on Calvary; and *that* was enough, indeed, to age one who so loved the agonizing Redeemer, and to turn his hair into silvery white. He had witnessed—with what heartrending sympathy!—the

* See Dan. viii. 27; x. 7—11, 16, 17. † Apoc. i. 17.

Dolours of the Mother—the "Woman" who had been addressed by the dying lips of Emmanuel. Then in Jerusalem, with imprisonment and scourging,* and then in Samaria, and afterwards in Parthia, and on the shores of the Persian Gulf, with toil, and contradiction, and all "the signs of apostleship,"† he had proclaimed his Master's Name in the face of Jewish hate and heathen corruption. Manifold persecutions he had endured, even to a great old age. This is the S. John of the Gospel, of the Church's annals, of the Church's calendar:—and, as we try to gaze upon that reverend face, with its love reflected from the Countenance of Jesus, instinct with the living light of a matured sanctity, as of gold long purified in a sevenfold furnace, the imaginary S. John of the artist wholly disappears.

S. John of ninety years and upward, comes before our thoughts. Wonderful would have been the record of his mission and miracles among those "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia,"‡ had they reached us. Would that some one, "like-minded," had accompanied his steps, as S. Luke attended S. Paul, and had been inspired to record the words, actions, miracles, of the Beloved Disciple! We should then have had "the Acts of S. John" as vividly before us, as the Holy Ghost has portrayed those of the Prince of the Apostles, and the Apostle of the Gentiles. But we will not speculate or fancy: that would be following in the steps of Domenichino. The few things we know of, are enough to make up the historical picture. For example: disclaiming any dramatic sense as attached to the words, we may make for ourselves the following scenes, by way of "composition of place."

1.

It is now five reigns, though short ones, since Nero, that relentless "lion"§ in human shape, passed off the stage which he had soaked in the blood and charred with the fires of martyrdom. The persecution of the Christians probably died down with him, for the most part: or if renewed from time to time, it was but at the

* Acts v. 40. † 2 Cor. xii. 12.
‡ Acts ii. 9. § 2 Tim. iv. 17.

private fancy of some cruel provincial governor, or at the instigation of Jews or pagans, by way of outbreak and fierce momentary clamour. Other Cæsars have meanwhile occupied the throne, too busy with foreign wars and domestic troubles to concern themselves much with "that sect of the Nazarene," except in a chance way.* Then we arrive at the brief reign of Titus, "the delight of mankind"—Titus, who lamented a day as wasted and lost, in which he had done no distinct act of good. But Titus passes away, all too soon for humanity; and Domitian now occupies his place.

With him, begins the Second regular Persecution ; and, being an imperial act, it is conducted with some form, and at no trifling expense. Eminent Christians, bishops above all, are sought for through the Empire, to be exhibited and martyred in Rome, as if they were the rarer sort of savage animals for the weapons of the gladiators. So, in a later reign, that of Trajan, S. Ignatius of Antioch, the friend of S. John's own disciple S. Polycarp, was taken all the way from Asia Minor to Rome, to be thrown to the lions. So now, with S. John himself, who has outlived all his brother Apostles. He has evangelized the ends of the earth, while Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, were playing their several parts, with various admixtures of good and evil. After this long course of service for his Beloved Lord, the Apostle is now seized by the proconsul of Asia, and sent, of course in chains, on the same weary voyage to Rome.

It would be of exceeding interest to compare, if we could, the three long voyages of confessorship endured by those great Saints, S. Paul, S. John, and finally S. Ignatius. None can be at a loss to know the dispositions of soul, in which they went through them. As to S. Paul, his words are recorded by inspiration. Spoken of all the sufferings that awaited him in Jerusalem, they equally interpret the spirit that carried him to Rome.

* This may be taken as having been generally the case, except during the special ten persecutions known to history. In the reign of Trajan, as appears from his correspondence with the younger Pliny, governor of Pontus, the usual policy was, to let the Christians alone, as long as they remained quiet, and to forbear inquiry or active persecution.

"I fear none of these things, neither do I count my life more precious than myself, so that I may consummate my course, and the ministry of the word which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."*

Again, when the disciples, hearing the prophet Agabus declare that the Apostle should be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem, and delivered to the Gentiles, besought him not to go up to the City, he broke into that word, alike of tenderness and zeal:

"What mean you, weeping and afflicting my heart? For I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die also in Jerusalem, for the Name of the Lord Jesus."†

S. Ignatius, too, has left us, in those short appeals that are all on fire with divine love, a record of his ardent, yearning desire for the martyrdom that awaited him within the vast amphitheatre.‡ He longed for the jaws of the lions to send him to his Lord, as a weary traveller longs for a couch of down, in the restful home to which he journeys.

And S. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved"—what aspiration shall we find for *his* lips, through all the long sea-voyage, until he stood before Domitian? We are not at a loss here, either. He has supplied it, or the Holy Ghost through his pen.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, come. . And he that thirsteth, let him come. . He that giveth testimony of these things, saith: Surely I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"§

II.

But it was not by the cross, like S. Peter, nor by the sword, like S. Paul, nor by the lions, like S. Ignatius, nor by fire, like S. Polycarp, that S. John was to witness for his Beloved. It might have been in mockery of his great age, but so it was, that they decreed to anoint him in a cauldron of boiling oil.

It may be imagined, without much effort, what rude jests then passed among the soldiers, the executioners of an Emperor's cruel will: how, while they brought the faggots

* Acts xx. 24. † Acts xxi. 13.
‡ See *Afternoons with the Saints*, "Saint Ignatius of Antioch."
§ Apoc. xxii. 17—20.

and kindled the fire outside the Latin Gate, while his emaciated limbs were bared for this supreme conflict, they tauntingly asked him, if he were an athlete preparing for the arena? Unconscious prophecy! The mortified Apostle had not been wont to use the perfumed unguents, numbered among the resources of luxury at that period: he had been reserved for this cruel and strange anointing. But, as they upheld him, and then immersed him in the seething cauldron, standing around, to hear such yells of torment, as would be wrung from ordinary sufferers while the flesh separated from its bones—lo! the servant and friend of God emerged again, as with youth and strength renewed. The miracle of the elder Babylon had been reproduced in the later;* for God's power is as great by the Tiber as by the Euphrates. The furnace of Nabuchodonosor was powerless over the three holy children, so that not even the smell of fire passed upon them.† And even thus, John, the son of Zebedee, but still more intimately the son of God, rises unharmed from his refreshing bath, invigorated still to do, or to suffer, whatever the Divine Will may have yet in store.

Banishment, then, not death: and to Patmos he is deported, an island among those that lie sprinkled‡ upon the Ægean Sea.

And there, as he records in his mystic epistle to the "angels," or bishops, of the Asiatic churches,

"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying: "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia."§

So the great announcement begins: but not to end there. The churches of Asia are in the dust; their very whereabouts can hardly be traced. Some masses of shapeless masonry alone indicate the Ephesus of the Beloved Disciple. Even the world-famed temple of "Diana of the Ephesians" is represented by a block, here or there, as the traveller stumbles over the ruins amid a fragrant undergrowth of cytisus and arbutus shrubs that hide them. The infidel crescent has supplanted the cross, in those "Eyes

* S. Peter v. 13. † Dan. iii. 94.
‡ It is, in fact, one of the *Sporades*. § Apoc. i. 10, 11.

of Asia,"* where John once taught, and Polycarp; where Ignatius wore his chains, and spoke, and wrote his stirring words. But the message of the Apocalypse lives on: passing away from the merely local and temporary, to the broader light of God's dealings with His Church through all time, and with men at large: until the reader is caught away in the spirit to see the final glories of the New Jerusalem.

Blessed banishment, happy Sunday, that gave room for so marvellous a revelation of our Lord's power and love, and stereotyped it for the Church's perpetual use! Blessed the disciples of S. John, and of all Saints and saintly souls, who after the week's fret and toil in this hard grinding life, maintain themselves "in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" who retire into some Patmos of a brief solitude, to commune with their own hearts; stealing into the quiet church, to prostrate before Jesus in His hidden Sacrament, to hear in silence and happy solitude the voice of their Spouse, to "see the delight of the Lord, and visit His temple!"†

III.

Domitian, in turn, has gone to his account; and, while his acts and deeds accompany him into the other world, they are rescinded on earth. The Senate, pagan though it be, grows ashamed, in this as in other instances, of the ultra-savagery of its imperial master. Nerva, the successor, is a mild prince, who recals the banished, and does something towards repairing injustices, and healing wounds. Among other results of this altered state of things, S. John is freed: free now to visit the churches, to which he wrote. All the more does he bend his steps to Ephesus, because, meanwhile, he has heard of the martyrdom of S. Timothy.

That holy bishop of Ephesus had occupied his seat for three-and-thirty years; and none may doubt that he had mostly guided his life, according to the injunctions of the great Apostle, who had given him so responsible a charge.

Some fault, indeed, there had been; and the Divine rebuke for it is recorded "for our correction, upon whom

* Ephesus and Smyrna were so called, from their intrinsic beauty, as well as from the importance of their position; looking out, as they did, to the Grecian archipelago, and the Peloponnesus. Not as Pericles denounced the hostile Ægina as "the eye-sore of the Piræus."

† Psalm xxvi. 4.

the ends of the world are come." * A rebuke loving, yet grave and awful, as from the Redeemer and Judge of souls, who will tolerate no failure among the pastors of His Church, to harm or discourage His redeemed.

"Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus write: These things saith He, who holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil: and thou hast tried them who say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and thou hast patience, and hast endured for My Name, and hast not fainted.

"But I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity. Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen; and do penance, and do the first works. Or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance." †

"It seems," says Cornelius à Lapide, "that S. Timothy, who had now been bishop of Ephesus for forty years,‡ had grown somewhat lukewarm in preaching the word of God, and in labouring for the conversion of the Ephesians; as seeing that both the Jews, and the gentile worshippers of "Diana of the Ephesians," obstinately withstood him. Hence, partly from discouragement and tepidity, partly from the suggestion of human prudence, as that for peace' sake he ought to proceed more quiety, and not bring fresh trouble on the Christian cause by excess of zeal, nor excite the unbelieving against himself and his flock (as had been S. Paul's case there, within his remembrance, when the whole multitude had shouted out against the Apostle, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians')—he had slackened in some degree his first ardour in preaching the gospel; and this in him was a venial, though not a mortal sin. For prelates often sin more through remissness, which comes upon them under guise of prudence, than by imprudence under guise of zeal. Yet either of these is a fault; and both are here reproved by Christ—the former in the bishop of Ephesus, the latter, in the bishop of Thyatira."

* 1 Cor. x. 11. † Apoc. ii. 1—5

‡ He was consecrated by S. Paul, A.D. 64, of the common reckoning, and martyred in 97.

What awakening words are those of our Lord from His throne, as spoken in rebuke of a great bishop and Saint! How? (we ask ourselves in fear,) here is one whose "works," whose "labour," whose "patience" are known and approved by his Judge—who "had not fainted" under stress of the world's hatred and scorn, and the persistent lying of false apostles. Yet this servant of God, this witness for the truth, prelate in the Church of his Master, is proclaimed as having left his first charity? He has to do penance, and return to the first works! He is threatened with the removal of his candlestick from among the seven!

Amply, however, S. Timothy atoned for his fault, by a glorious martyrdom. It seems to have been one among the latest cruelties of Domitian that sent the holy Bishop to Heaven; and this brought S. John, now released from Patmos by the Emperor Nerva, to reside at Ephesus, as more than "angel" to the churches of Asia.

"Great is Diana of the Ephesians," * was an idolatrous cry that resounded throughout Asia Minor. All along the coast, and penetrating inland, went that pagan anthem. What man was there, that knew not that the city of the Ephesians was a worshipper of the great Diana, and of the image that fell down from heaven?" † The martyrdoms at Ephesus must have taken that especial form; a rabble rout, sometimes under authority of the prætor, sometimes with no authority but their own sweet will, dragging a Christian towards that marvellous fane. There it stands; a seventh wonder of the world; the noble symmetry of its Ionic portico revealed in every line that glitters in the Asiatic sunshine. Never, perhaps, except in the worship of Minerva in the Parthenon, had there been a less debasing form of idolatry than that of Diana, the virgin huntress: but it *was* idolatry—one of the many phases of demon-worship, after all. No Christian could draw near to it; no Christian bishop or teacher tolerate it.

In a word, then, S. Timothy confronted these deluded idolaters, and sealed his witness for the truth with his life-

* Acts xix. 27, 28, 34.

† *Ibid.* verse 35. The Vulgate here reads "Jupiter's offspring:" but the Greek has the neuter, as referring to the image of cedar-wood, overlaid with gold, in veneration at Ephesus. It was fabled to have fallen from heaven, like the olive-wood Athene (p. 282, *note*).

blood. His "first charity"* had returned to him in its fulness; he had received the warning of his Divine Master, as precious seed into the soil of "a good and very good heart;† he not only had "done penance, and the first works," but transcended even the merit of his Apostolate by the superior, the supreme charity of his martyrdom.

IV.

The attributes of the Beloved Disciple are so beautiful and engaging, that any authentic incident in his life must needs be of great interest. One special anecdote, then, is preserved for us by Clement of Alexandria,‡ who writes in the second century. It belongs to the latter days of S. John's life, and reveals to us him to whom was committed, as a "daily anxiety, the solicitude"§ of the Seven Churches of Asia, and the neighbourhood, making his apostolic rounds, "as he passed through, visiting all."‖ We see, also, his daily anxiety and solicitude not only spread over the mass of the faithful, but individualized on particular persons, as on Caius, on the lady Electa,¶ and on the youth who forms the subject of this narrative.

"Hear now a tale," writes Clement; "or rather, not a tale but a true narration, handed down and preserved, concerning the Apostle S. John. Upon the death of the tyrant [Domitian], he returned from the island of Patmos to Ephesus; and, on their invitation, visited the neighbouring regions. On coming to a certain city, the name of which is by some reported, he refreshed in manifold ways the spirit of the brethren. Finally, observing a youth of noble bearing, engaging countenance, and ardent spirit, he turned to the bishop of the place, and said: 'With all earnestness, in the presence of the Church, and of Christ, who is witness to the trust, I commend this youth to your care.' The bishop made every promise; and John, after having again pressed this charge upon him, and conjured him duly to fulfil it, set out on his return to Ephesus. The priest** took the youth,

* Apoc. ii. 4. † S. Luke viii. 15.
‡ Clem. Alex. Serm. xlii. *Quis dives.*
§ 2 Cor. xi. 28. ‖ Acts ix. 32. ¶ 2 and 3 S. John.
** That is, the Bishop. The terms were interchanged in primitive times, though it is more frequent to find the priest called *episcopus*, than vice versâ. The episcopate is in truth, the fulness of the priesthood.

thus committed to him, unto his own home. He expended much pains upon him; he instructed him, restrained him from evil, treated him with all kindness, and at length baptized him. Afterwards, however, he relaxed somewhat of that extreme spiritual care and guardianship of the young man; as having set upon him the seal of the Lord, which would be his ample safeguard. But evil soon followed this premature liberty; for some idle and dissolute companions, of the young man's own age, already far advanced in evil, took advantage of it to corrupt him.

"First, they enticed him by repeated clandestine banquetings. Then they sallied forth at night, for plunder and highway robbery; taking him with them on these nocturnal expeditions. At length, they persuade him to unite with them,* and to participate in things even worse. He, too, by degrees, became inured to iniquity; and, having started aside from the right track, like a powerful, hardmouthed steed, seizing the bit with his teeth, was hurried by the energy of his character, all the more vehemently, down the abyss. At length, convinced that he had lost all hope of Divine salvation,† he formed designs of no common wickedness; and, being given over to perdition, thought to perpetrate some great enormity, and so to bring on his own head the same fate as his companions. He therefore gathered and attached himself to a band of robbers, of whom he became foremost and leader; the most violent, fierce, and bloodthirsty of them all.

"Some time after, John was sent for to this city, on some urgent occasion. After setting in order what he had undertaken his journey for, he said: 'Now, O bishop, restore to me the pledge which I, together with our Lord, intrusted to your charge, in presence of the Church over which you preside.' At first, the bishop was astonished at these words; imagining some false accusation laid to his charge, of having detained monies which he had never received. While, on the one hand, he could not persuade himself that he had what he had not, so on the other hand, he could not disbelieve John. On this, the latter said: 'I claim again that youth, and the soul of our brother!' The old man, with a sigh, and shedding many tears, exclaimed:

* See Prov. i. 10—16. † Compare Eph. iv. 19.

'He is dead!' 'How?' said John: 'what death did he die?' 'He is dead to God,' was the answer; 'for he has turned out ill, a reprobate, and in one word, a robber. Now, instead of frequenting the Church, he frequents the mountain, with a band of robbers like himself.' On this, the Apostle, rending his garments, with groans, and smiting his head, exclaimed: 'An excellent guardian have I left, of a brother's soul! Let me at once have a horse, and let some one be my guide!' He then rode straightway from the Church, even as he was, and made all speed upon his journey. On arriving at the place, he was captured by those who occupied the outposts for the robber-band. He neither sought to escape, nor used any intreaty; but cried aloud: 'For this am I come; lead me to your chief.' He, meanwhile, was waiting for his captive, ready armed. When he recognised John approaching him, he was so overwhelmed with confusion, that he immediately took to flight. But John hastened after him, with all speed, forgetful of his age; and cried out: 'Why dost thou fly from me, my son—unarmed, and aged, as I am? Have compassion on me, my son:—fear not!' Thou mayest still hope for life. I will render an account for thee to Christ. If needful, I will most willingly bear thy death, as the Lord bore ours: I will give my life for thine. Stay! Believe! Christ hath sent me.'

"On hearing this, the young robber at first stood still, and cast his eyes on the ground. He flung away his weapons; he trembled, and wept bitterly. Then, as the aged man drew near, he embraced him, and, pleading for himself as best he might, with many groanings he was baptized in his tears,* hiding all the while his right hand. Then the Apostle, pledging and assuring him, that on his knees he had obtained pardon for him through the Saviour, and kissing that right hand that had been cleansed through repentance, brought him back to the Church. Thenceforward, deprecating the Divine wrath by frequent

* Not meaning, of course, that he received the Sacrament of baptism again, which is impossible; but that his tears of sincere repentance, through the merits of our Lord's Most Precious Blood, washed his soul, as a preparation for the ecclesiastical penance he would receive at the hands of the Apostle, who "brought him back to the Church."

supplications, and also wrestling for him by continual fasts, which they observed together, comforting moreover his soul with frequent discourses, he desisted not (it is said) until he had restored him to the Church; thus affording in his example a great testimony to the new birth, and a trophy of the resurrection as an object of hope."

V.

Have we room for yet one more brief scene? Then we must take flight over some thousand years,* and find ourselves in Westminster, in such rude kingly dwelling, as might go by the name of "palace" in the days of the sainted Confessor.

The last and best of the Anglo-Saxon kings had ever a special devotion to the Apostle S. John. Without comparison of degree, there was something kindred in their type of sanctity. Both of them virgin Saints; both of them tender, gentle, penetrated with the spirit of love to Jesus and His redeemed. Had S. Edward been a bishop—we hardly dare take the thought higher—and had he penned his pastoral epistles, they would have abounded in such tender expressions as mark those of S. John. Had S. John been called to a throne, he would have ruled the happy kingdom committed to him, with the mildness and gentle simplicity † of S. Edward, as a man. Here, again, there is no comparing of degrees, but merely of kind.

S. Edward, then, had determined never to refuse a request, made to him in the name of the "disciple whom Jesus loved." One day, towards the close of his saintly life, a beggar presented himself—or one who outwardly seemed such—and begged, in S. John's name, that the king would bestow on him an alms. But king and beggar appeared then about on a par; nor was it the first time that S. Edward had exhausted his royal coffers in charity. Nothing remained to him, at the moment, but his signet-

* S. Edward died in the beginning of the year 1066, and was canonized, about a century after, by Pope Alexander III.

† William of Malmesbury says of S. Edward, that he was "from simplicity of character, little fitted for a kingdom; but devout to God, and directed by Him." "God so cherished his simplicity, that he was feared, who could not be provoked."

ring. "Hold," whispered worldly prudence, "bestow this on a mendicant?" "Give," suggested Faith, Hope, Charity, with one voice—"you will rejoice at it, in eternity." So the petitioner went away with the ring.

And now, the Confessor's life is failing, and he draws near to his reward. His need is, not food nor raiment, but a comfortable sense that "underneath are the Everlasting Arms."* Death has been recognized as a terrible thing, even by Saints; while others, who have been very far from sanctity, have met their death with carelessness, only because they little realized the tremendous character of that launch into eternity, and the strict account to Him Who "stands before the door."†

If S. Edward was visited by any such humble, wholesome, purifying apprehensions in his last days, his comfort was near at hand. By some mode of communication, not known to us—whether a mendicant, real or seeming, or else through a channel more plainly supernatural, the glorified Apostle returned that ring to his client, in token of his prevailing intercession; and the holy King soon afterwards departed this mortal life in peace.

COLLECT.

Mercifully shed light, O Lord, on Thy Church: that, being illumined by the teachings of blessed John, Thy Apostle and Evangelist, it may attain unto [Thy] eternal gifts. Through our Lord.

* Deut. xxxiii. 27. † S. James v. 9.

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SAINT SILVESTER,

POPE AND CONFESSOR.

DECEMBER 31.

A.D. 335.

THE year winds up with S. Silvester; a Saint of a strange, twofold life:—strange enough, if you regard the revulsion of feeling that must have been his, when persecution ceased on the Emperor's conversion. For Silvester was both the last persecuted and the first unpersecuted Pope.

He is still lying concealed, as old chronicles tell, in some rude cave, amid the thickets of Mount Soracte; a mountain whose outlines are familiar to all tourists and gazers, as they look out from the windows of the Belvedere gallery in the Vatican. And Soracte, especially during inclement weather, is no inviting place of sojourn. Horace describes the snow as lying deep upon it, in winter. You were much more likely to meet a wolf there, than that same Horace was in his Sabine farm, where, as he tells us, he met with a monster of that unpleasant kind. Moreover, besides snows and wolves, the Pope might expect a visit from some party of soldiers, sent to seize him, to drag him before the heathen magistrate. Then, the rack, and the molten lead, and the boiling pitch and loaded whips, by which Roman magistrates were accustomed to show zeal for the religion of "the immortal gods," and "the divine and most clement Emperors."

We may follow the Holy Father in thought, for it is thought rather than mere fancy, as he emerges from his

hiding place to take a breath of air, somewhere* on the slope of the mountain, looking towards Rome.

There lies the imperial City, within sight, though at a distance. Its golden roofs are just caught by the sunlight; some of the more eminent among the buildings may be seen above the circuit of its massive walls.

One of our Lord's disciples once came to Him, as He was going out of the Temple; and, pointing to the massive glories that had taken forty and sixty years to raise—said: "Master, behold what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" And Jesus answering, said to him: "Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down."† That must have appeared, to the disciples who heard Him, an astonishing forecast into the future. But is it not as wonderful, that the great Flavian amphitheatre, the Colosseum, whose sand was soaked with Christian blood, should become a place of devotion for "the lovers of Jesus and Mary?"‡ Or that the Pantheon of Agrippa should receive a new dedication, in honour of our Lady and all the Martyrs?§ Or that any of those other marvellous transformations should take place, that have made the ruling City of the world's wickedness become the very metropolis of the Christian faith?

From the height of Socrate, where he is standing, S. Silvester could hardly have discerned those twin columns, surmounted at that day by the triumphal statues of Trajan and Antoninus, and afterwards to uphold the honoured forms of S. Peter and S. Paul. They lie low; one of them beneath the towering Capitol, the other on ground equally depressed. But he must have seen the lofty marble portico of the great temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, its columns lit up by the morning sun, while the smoke of the early sacrifice ascended into the still air.

* A particular spot on Soracte, now Mount Sant' Oreste, is pointed out as having been the Pope's hiding-place, and is marked by the church and monastery of *San Silvestro*.

† S. Mark xiii. 1, 2.

‡ The title of the Arch-confraternity, whose members used to perform the *Via Crucis* in the Coliseum, every Friday and Sunday, until the Stations were thrown down by those who now hold Rome in their unrighteous grasp.

§ It was consecrated under this title by Boniface IV. in 607.

What yearning thoughts possessed him, as he looked forth upon the Mistress of the then-known world—the home of every falsehood and idol-worship, who prided herself, even therefore, on her great religiousness and liberality!* There was she, stately and gorgeous, seated on her seven hills, the sorceress of a thousand years, ruler of almost a score of provinces, commander of more than forty resistless legions. She is clad, as S. John had seen her in vision, with the imperial purple of a world-wide dominion; and, for the last three centuries of her long existence, she has been "drunk with the blood of the Saints." Ten bitter persecutions—Pope after Pope a martyr—the crucified fisherman of Galilee leaving to his successors an inheritance of "earnest contention for the Faith once delivered to the Saints:"† the keys of the kingdom of Heaven dropping from each holder's hand in turn, to be taken up by another sufferer, and carried on till the moment of that martyrdom which assuredly waited himself—such was the history of blood and patient triumph that surrounded S. Peter's Chair. Such must have been the thoughts revolving in the mind of Silvester, its present occupant.

Nor is it any great stretch of fancy to suppose how astonishing to him was the news, in whatever way conveyed, that the long iniquities of centuries had come to an end, and the Cross had finally triumphed. Was it some zealous catechumen, or youthful Christian, running, like Achimaas,‡ the Son of Sadoc, when that youth outstripped Chusai to bring news of victory to David? Was it a Christian soldier from Constantine's victorious ranks, who got or presumed leave of absence, when the battle had been won at the Milvian bridge? Hither, perhaps, comes the legionary, straight from the banks of Tiber, at the point where that historic stream runs no longer "yellow," but crimsoned with the slaughter of those who followed Maxentius. He comes to salute the first Pope who has survived persecution. Dusty and dinted and stained as his armour shows, he is

* *Magnam sibi videbatur assumpsisse religionem, quia nullam respuebat falsitatem,* said S. Leo, of Pagan Rome. "She flattered herself as having received a large amount of piety, because there was no form of falsehood that she rejected" (*Serm. I. in Nativ. SS. Petri et Pauli*).

† S. Jude, 3. ‡ 2 Kings xviii. 19, &c.

yet the herald of a lasting peace. Or is it, quite as probably, an embassage from Constantine himself, to declare his conversion to the Faith, and intreat the Pontiff to come into the City, and confer with him?

These are minor questions, or suppositions, such as might occupy the artist, or the poet, who should select this striking moment for a theme. They are his "composition of place;" and, either way, he has no ordinary subject before him, on which to employ his gifts.

Yet we must not be led away to forget the actual circumstances of time and place, as they have come down to us in the Acts of S. Silvester. Here they are, then; better late than never.*

"After the heavenly sign, presage of Constantine's victory over Maxentius at the Milvian bridge, the Roman Campagna seems to be illumined with a softer light. The first souvenir of entirely peaceful days appears to come from a mountain which the voyager always has in view, whatever route he follows to arrive in Rome. If he has not quite lost his classical memories, he will not fail, on the first sight of Mont' Oreste, once Soracte, to repeat the stanza of Horace, who describes it as rising to sight under a deep covering of snow, and looking down on frozen streams, and forests labouring under a weighty burden.† A Christian poet would prefer to attribute to Soracte the ideas of Spring; for it witnessed the opening of a scene that denoted the final term of the long winter of persecutions. Here had Pope S. Silvester sought refuge,‡ at a time when it was not yet certain that he could safely reside in Rome. Some priests from among his clergy had followed him; and he lived with them in the cavernous recesses of this mountain. One day, he saw armed men climbing the steep tracks, seemingly in search of some one in this desert spot. Such a visit, in such a place, made him suppose they came to bring him a

* This passage now given, from Gerbet's *Rome Chrétienne*, was lit upon for the first time, after the present sketch had been sent to press.

† Vides, ut altâ stet nive candidum
Soracte, nec jam sustineant onus
Silvæ laborantes, geluque
Flumina constiterent acuto (*Hor. Od.* I. ix.).

‡ "Latuit in Soractis monte Silvester, . . loco consonum nomen habens" (Petrarch, *De Vitâ Solit.* lib. ii.).

martyr's crown. He said, to the priests who were with him: 'Behold the acceptable time: behold the day of salvation.' That troop of soldiers conducted him to Rome, into the presence of Constantine; and, shortly after, he who had fled for refuge to Soracte dwelt in the imperial palace of the Lateran.

"When S. Silvester, coming forth from his conference with Constantine, assured the Christians in Rome that the clouds of persecution had broken, God's people might have exclaimed, as they looked at Soracte: '*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of Him,*' Who, having prayed there during the evil time, is now come down thence, and '*bringeth good tidings, that preacheth peace: of Him who showeth forth good, who bringeth salvation, who saith to Sion: Thy God shall reign.**

"The most celebrated of those religious [who afterwards made Soracte the Thebaid of the Roman Campagna, by retiring thither, into a holy solitude] was S. Nonnosus, mentioned by S. Gregory the Great, in his Dialogues. His relics, having been translated to Bavaria during the middle ages, were not brought back to their ancient place of interment till long after. A Spring day was chosen, for replacing them on the summit of Soracte. The good chronicler who has given us the details of that occasion, has put into his simple prose account the opposite view to Horace's description of the mountain's glacial aspect. He says: 'Fitting was it, that this lily of purity should be brought back thither in the season of fragrant flowers; for its return proclaimed to the population of Soracte a spring-tide of graces: that festival was a blossoming month of April for their souls.'"†

But it is more than time to go back to the Pope and the Emperor.

A grave question is debated by the historian. What was the period, what the circumstances, of Constantine's baptism? And what about Constantine himself?

The first Christian Emperor has had his portrait taken

* Isaias lii. 7.

† Gerbet, *ut supra;* rather drily translating the more fervent and florid Italian original (*Memorie di S. Nonnos. Abb. del Soratte, Roma*, 1675).

by very different hands. If we are to believe Gibbon, he was in many ways an unsatisfactory character: but then, Gibbon is a scoffer, whose misrepresentations have had their day. If we turn to Eusebius, Constantine stands out on the page, in all the glory of an eminent Christian; but then, Eusebius is a panegyrist, and the Emperor his topic and his hero. Even this writer cannot but blame Constantine's lavish expenditure of the State revenues upon unworthy favourites: which seems to have been one of the curses of the Empire. Taxes, also, which were imposed by his pagan predecessors on the mercantile interest and the lower orders, were continued, and even increased. On the other hand, Constanstine used every effort to distribute these imposts equitably; and he repressed the unjust exactions of the officers charged with collecting them.

Other facts of his life might be adduced, to fling into the balance, for or against him: the truth, meanwhile, probably lies somewhere between the opposite scales.*

But one thing is certain. Having thus received the faith; having seen the luminous Cross in the sky, with the assurance it gave him of victory; having been favoured with a vision of our Lord Himself, commanding him to reproduce that Sacred symbol on the *labarum*—the conquering standard surmounted by the Cross and the Monogram of the Holy Name—after all this, Constantine never presented himself for baptism, till within a short time of his death. Not all his reverence for his mother S. Helena, and for the faith that had made her Saint; not the successes he had achieved by the power of the Crucified, could induce him to approach the Sacrament of the new birth. Was it reverential fear? was it shrinking from the obligations he would thereby undertake? Who shall say? History only tells us, he lived a catechumen of years' standing, and died a "clinical" Christian of perhaps some few days old.

Whatever the inconsistencies of the first converted Cæsar, he was at least resolved to extend the protection of the Empire over S. Silvester, and make him the first unpersecuted Pope. He was going to support the Church, if not as a pillar inside, yet as a buttress from without. Let none of us presume to judge of Constantine's motives. But, viewed

* See Röhrbacher's *Hist. of the Church*, vol. iii. 464, etc.

in the light of his acts, he seems to have aimed at buying off the oblation of personal service by giving of earth's precious things instead.

"I seek not the things that are yours, but you;"* is the expression of the Divine yearning desire to possess hearts and wills, above gold, silver, gems, in howsoever great abundance. Whereas, the response of man, faithless, loveless, disappointing, so often is: "Be pleased to accept, not me, but mine."

Not further to criticize Constantine, his conviction that the Christian faith was true, at once became its great advantage. The faithful emerged from their subterranean hiding-places, and stood, fearless and rejoicing, in upper Rome. "This is the change of the Right Hand of the Most High." Henceforward, these catacombs, in which they had so long endured stifling heat, rayless darkness, crowding, daily uncertainity of life, nay, daily protracted death—became places of loving pilgrimage. Places of thankful prayer for children of the martyrs: hallowed spots, where they ambitioned to be buried, in their turn, "near the Saints." The Cross†—O wonderful revulsion of feeling—so lately the symbol of a shameful malefactor's death, a gibbet of infamy—now rears its form aloft, on every place of honour. It glitters on the Emperor's palace; it catches the morning light from an eminence on the roofs of those basilicas, or courts of justice, which Constantine has made over to S. Silvester for Christian worship.

Of these basilicas, the principal one is a palace that had formerly belonged to a certain senator, Plautius Lateranus. He had become involved in a conspiracy against Nero, and

* 2 Cor. xii. 14.

† An epitaph in the cemetery of S. Cyriaca marks the place which two Christian women had chosen for themselves during life, "in a new crypt behind the Saints"—*in crypta nova retro sanctus* (sic). A husband and wife made themselves a tomb "before Saint Emerita;" this inscription is fixed at the year 426. Again: "Dracontius Pelagius and Julia Etelia Antonia prepared for themselves, together with their daughter, a place near Hippolytus, over the *arcisolium*," or arched altar-tomb in which that eminent martyr reposed. S. Damasus expresses his desire for a like privilege, while he records the reverential motive that withheld him from claiming it:

Hic fateor Damasus volui mea condere membra,
Sed cineres timui sanctos vexare piorum.

suffered death for it.* The residence had doubtless been seized by that Emperor, when he took the possessor's life: and so it had come into Constantine's hands. That poor old pagan Lateranus has left a name behind him, that has resounded through the annals of Christianity. When a stranger visits Rome, and is told that S. Peter's, with all its stateliness, is not the real Cathedral of the Eternal City, he is further told that the church of S. John Lateran is that of which the Pope is Bishop, and is therefore "the Mother and Mistress of all churches." When the student of history traces the promulgation of doctrine through canons and decrees, framed by successive Councils to refute each false doctrine, as it arose—he comes across the five Lateran Councils, held in that church in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fifteenth centuries. Under the high altar of that great Lateran basilica is preserved the rude wooden table, more like an ark or chest, on which S. Peter said his daily Mass: no one ever offers the Adorable Sacrifice over that precious relic, but the Pope himself. Lastly, beyond the apse at the altar-end, still stands the ancient baptistery, crusted with mosaics, where Constantine is said, at the end of his days, to have been "buried with Christ in baptism," and raised from the waters of his new birth to a new life, though perhaps a very brief one.

The Lateran palace was an edifice already standing; though we do not know how much alteration had to be made, to convert it into a place for the Adorable Sacrifice. But at the Vatican, and for the basilica which Constantine had determined to build there over S. Peter's tomb, everything had to be done from the beginning. It was merely a hill-side, with a small half-concealed opening, almost like a burrow of the foxes of the desert, leading under ground.

This Vatican hill rose gently, at no great distance from the banks of Tiber; yet attaining a sufficient eminence (so Horace implies)† to catch and give back an echo of the multitudinous sounds and cries of busy Rome. Its grassy

* Tacitus has left a mournfully graphic account of the stern and dignified manner in which Lateranus met his death (*Annal.* xv. 60).

† Hor. *Od.*

Redderet laudes tibi Vaticani
Montis imago.

slopes, thickly besprinkled with spring flowers, must have been often trod by idlers and holiday-makers from the Eternal City. It was a kind of Primrose Hill for Romans during the long pagan centuries. But on that spot was now to rear its unrivalled front the most marvellous of Christian temples. There was to be the shrine, whose nearness to heaven, in its topmost pinnacle, would only be outdone, in these latest days, by the spires of Cologne; a fabric that answers, beyond all others, to the Christian poet's feeling, in view of a stately cathedral:

> They thought not of a perishable home
> Who thus could build.

For the lowly tomb of S. Peter marks the spot for his basilica. Not yet the marvellous structure of Bramante or Michael Angelo; but such as the wealth of an Emperor, and the half-Roman, half-Byzantine style of his time, combined to raise to the Divine glory.

Constantine sets to work at this pious labour, in right earnest. He is not going to delegate to others the privilege of having a first hand in it. It was on the octave day of his baptism; at least, according to one account, which would make him to have been regenerated a longer time before his death. Anyhow, catechumen or neophyte, he comes to the spot, and there, "Putting off his diadem, and prostrate on the earth, he poured forth a power * of tears; then, taking spade and shovel, broke the ground, and taking out of it twelve basketsful of soil, in honour of the twelve Apostles, and marking out the locality for the basilica of the Prince of the Apostles, he built the church."

It was an act of faith and humility, in the master of the then-known world, to become as "a hewer of wood and carrier of water"† for the religion of the Nazarene. But when a man has once seen the Cross, whether traced in lines of light in the Heavens, or indicated in a line of life which he is bidden to follow, that is to him like the pillar of a cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night.

* An expression, however correct, which, in process of time, has become the usage of the less educated. It is a literal version of the original: *vim lacrymarum profudit. Brev. Rom. in Fest. Dedic. Basilicar. SS. Apos. Pet. et Paul.* Nov. 18.

† Josue ix. 23.

It marshals him on to every duty, with an assurance of victory; if not of temporal success, yet of triumph for eternity, over his soul's foes, and over himself. It is the sign: "In this thou shalt conquer" — the invincible *Labarum*,* for it is the standard of the great King.

And now, from that day onward, the Church is by comparison at peace. No more "Christians to the lions!"— that savage shout is unheard in Rome. The equuleus, the cruel distending rack, no longer holds its victim aloft, or dislocates his limbs, because he insists on professing the Faith. The very malefactors are crucified no more. *Crucifer!—furcifer!*† vanish as terms of reproach, out of reverence for Him who hung on His Cross on Calvary, and was reviled by His enemies who stood beneath.

There is a breathing-time after the storm: it will only suffer a brief interruption when Julian shall do his utmost to set up Jupiter and the rest of the pantheon on their pedestals again—and fail. They who man the bark of Peter have now leisure to refit: they can mend the tattered sail, and splice the strained spars of their vessel. The after-voyage is not to lie through the buffeting billows of persecution, but amid the treacherous shoals and sandbanks of heresy. Let us not anticipate a sorrowful chapter that opens for the Church historian, the moment the blood-streaked page has closed. How wonderful the Divine patience, that allowed the persecuting Cæsar to run his destined span; and endured, later on, the pride and perversity of nominal Christians, in their efforts to distort, to deny, to

* Eusebius, who had seen this sacred standard, has given a particular description of it. After the vision in which the luminous Cross appeared to Constantine, and while he was yet meditating on the meaning it was to convey, a sudden night came on; "at which time, the Christ of God appeared to him during sleep, with that sign which had been shown him in the heavens; and commanded him to have a standard made, after the pattern of what he had seen in Heaven, and to use it as a defence in his engagements with his enemies. As soon as it was day, he arose, and declared the whole secret to his friends. Then he called together workers of gold and precious stones, and himself sat in their midst, gave them a description of that standard, and ordered them to express its likeness in gold and gems: and this standard we ourselves once had a sight of."

† Equivalent to the term "gallows-bird," to be found, perhaps, in the dictionary.

efface the fair outlines of His "eternal gospel!"* How beautiful, too, and how powerful, "the very various many-tinted"† manifestation of His grace—His "grace in seasonable aid"‡—that was faith and fortitude and patience§ in those early martyred heroes, that was unshaken witness and constant endurance in the "earnest contention," by their children, "for the faith once delivered to the Saints!"‖

COLLECT.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the feast of blessed Silvester, Thy confessor and pontiff, which we reverently celebrate, may increase our devotion, and further our salvation. Through.

It is time to close the gate of this spiritual Paradise, up and down which we have been ranging with a very poor endeavour to thread its mazes and wealth of flowers. How rich, how varied, and attractive; fair in colour, and with odours how fragrant! The red rose of martyrdom, the stainless lily of purity, the breathing violet, rather perceived than seen; and those strong and stately growths, none the less specially favoured or fostered by the Breath of God, that occupy station, and sustain many-branching ponderous burdens, in His Church. We must leave them all, so far as these pages have been their too scanty memorial. One pervading spirit goes through that paradise "at the afternoon air,"¶ stirring its mingled fragrance, as the "spirit of a thousand flowers." That breath is the quickening Spirit of the Most High. "Come, O south wind, blow through My garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow forth."**

One Eden alone is fairer, sweeter, fuller of delight; the great Paradise of the Church Triumphant, into which the Saints have one by one been transplanted; passing through, in turn, while the Cherubim guard its gates: unscathed by the flaming sword that turns every way†† to keep aloof the profane and the abominable, to sever eternally between the

* Apoc. xiv. 6. † Eph. iii. 10. ‡ Heb. iv. 16.
§ Apoc. xiii. 10. ‖ S. Jude 3.
¶ Gen. iii. 8. ** Cant. iv. 16. †† Gen. iii. 24.

precious and the vile, to clear for His elect a safe path, "a straight way and a holy way"* to the Tree of Life.

Thither is He, the Lord of that happy place of unfading delights, inviting us also. He bids us vindicate our birthright to appear one day among those our "fellow citizens," by the same path of conquest, with the same panopoly of combat and defence, and by the sustaining strength of the same sacramental Grace. For that Voice, which is summons, alike, and promise, sounds as from the trumpet of an Archangel:

"To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the Paradise of my God."†

COLLECT.

Multiply upon us Thy grace, O Lord our God: and grant that in our holy [Christian] profession we may follow in their rejoicing those whose glorious solemnities we anticipate. Through our Lord.

* Is. xxxv. 8. † Apoc. ii. 7.

APPENDIX.

A.

The Shrine of St. Geneviève.

(P. 25.)

"SOUS le roi Dagobert Ier le corps de Ste. Geneviève fut exhumé et enfermé dans une châsse magnifique due à l'art de S. Eloi, de Noyon ; en 1242 cette châsse fut remplacée par un reliquaire encore plus precieux. Geneviève est la patronne de Paris ; sa châsse, enrichie par les rois de France,* était solennellement portée en procession le jour de sa fête. Aujourdhui encore, la chapelle où reposent ses reliques,† dans l'église de Saint-Etienne du Mont, est très-fréquentée, et la neuvaine qui commence le 3 janvier, jour de sa mort, attire une foule immense de fidèles."

Goschler's translation, from the German, of Wetzer and Welte's "Encyc. Dict. of Catholic Theology," in *voc.* Geneviève. The work was published in 1870 : but, as the authorities quoted are Baronius and Tillemont, the writer may have overlooked the fact of the after-destruction of the relics at the end of the last century.

B.

British Devotion to Saint Germanus.

(P. 29.)

Weever (*Ancient Funeral Monuments*, 1631, p. 383) quotes Camden's account of the city of S. Alban's, to the following effect (the spelling modernized) :

"About the year of the world's redemption, 429, when as the Pelagian heresy budded forth afresh in this island, and so

* Especially by Mary de Medicis and the ladies of her court, who added to it an *aigrette* of precious diamonds.

† This must mean, some portion of them which had escaped the fury of the Revolution, or had been originally given to the church here named, or translated into it from another quarter.

polluted the British churches, as that to aver and maintain the truth, they sent for German, bishop of Auxerre, the place of his birth, (a man of much noble lineage, taught and informed well in the arts liberal, learned in the science of the decrees, droits, and law, saith his legend), and Lupus, bishop of Troyes, out of France: who, by refuting this heresy, gained unto themselves a reverent account among the Britons; but chiefly German, who hath at this day, throughout all this island, many churches dedicated to his memory. Now, understand, that near to the walls of the old city Verulam was, as then, a plot of consecrated ground, wherein the bodies of such as had professed Christianity and suffered martyrdom under the persecution of the Roman Emperors, were interred. In which the said German openly (out of the pulpit) preached God's word to the people; where afterwards the believing Christians built this chapel [of S. German's, in the city of S. Alban's] and dedicated it to his honour; for that by his doctrine, and other good means, he had converted many thousands to the true profession of Christian religion."

"The town of S. Germans in Cornwall, with its old Priory, the Abbey-church of Selby in Yorkshire, dedicated to S. German, the Cathedral-church of the Isle of Man, a chapel yet visible in the Abbey of S. Alban's, and the field of a famous victory obtained in Wales, by the Britons under S. German's auspices, and still called Maes Garmon, or Field of German: these are the most prominent instances, though doubtless there are many other traces of the Saint and his name in that storehouse of old traditions and fond remembrances, Wales" (Introd. to Life of S. German, *Lives of English Saints*, 1844).

C.

Foundations of Saint Germanus in Britain.

(P. 29.)

It was probably on this second visit, that St. Germanus, (acompanied now by S. Severus, Archbishop of Triers), made British Christianity permanently his debtor by the establishment of seats of learning, which afterwards became so renowned, and by means of which Britain, on the testimony of S. Bede, "continued pure in the faith, and free from heresy." S. Dubricius, whom he consecrated archbishop of Llandaff, had, for years, a thousand scholars in his two seminaries on the Wye. The schools of S. Iltutus, in Glamorganshire, were equally celebrated, as well as those of Paulinus in Caermarthenshire, where S. David studied. The list of S. Germanus' educational gifts to our islands includes with the scholastic foundations of Llanearvan and of Benchor or Bangor.

D.

Saint Alphonsus and Voltaire.

(P. 141.)

Voltaire was nearly being brought into more direct relations with another great Saint of these later days: but the just judgment of God seemed to withhold from him the grace he might thereby have received. The incident is thus related by Tannoia, the earliest biographer of S. Alphonsus Liguori, and the companion of his last years.

"The news was current in Naples, in May, 1778, that Voltaire was converted, and had retracted. He [S. Alphonsus] was so filled with joy, that he wrote to congratulate him. The Saint was then in his eighty-third year, and Voltaire in his eighty-fourth. 'He who writes this letter to you,' he said, 'is a bishop, nearly worn out by infirmities; and the Sovereign Pontiff has condescended to allow him to resign the administration of his diocese of S. Agatha of the Goths. In my last days, at the advanced age of eighty-three, your conversion, which is as happy for you as it is satisfactory to all good Catholics, has been a subject of such great joy to me, that I cannot help writing you this letter, such as it is, to rejoice with you in the sincerity of my heart. For I sorrowed and groaned at seeing you abuse the truly great genius you have received from God; and, although I am the most worthless of men, I have often addressed prayers to God, that the Father of Mercies would cause you to abandon your error, and at length draw you to His love. What I have so ardently longed for, has come to pass. Your conversion (I speak as I feel) will be of more benefit to the Church than the redoubled labours of a hundred companies of missioners. That this universal joy may be complete, and to remove the slightest doubt regarding your conversion, I would have you write something as a refutation of your errors and sophistries.' He then exhorts him to write against another modern writer—evidently J. J. Rousseau. Voltaire, however, died on May 30, 1778, *before* S. Alphonsus had sent his letter. The news of Voltaire's impenitent death reached Naples; and the Saint exclaimed: 'Such conversions are not ordinary graces. They are the effects of Divine mercy, but of no common degree of mercy. God only grants blessings of this sort to those whose errors have arisen from a good intention, like those of S. Paul. But all is very bad in Voltaire'" (Tannoia's Life of S. Alphonsus Liguori, vol. iv. p. 289, *Oratorian Saints' Lives*).

For another example of striking coincidences in the lives of God's servants and of His enemies, we may take the following.

S. Ignatius was raised up as the champion of the orthodox faith, and taught men *sentire cum Ecclesia*, just at the time when Luther was breaking away from it. Thus, he was born in 1491, eight years after the birth of Luther in 1483. In 1522, S. Ignatius makes his general confession to a Benedictine of Montserrat, and Luther writes his book against the religious Orders. In 1534, he assembles his first companions, and they pronounce their vows at Montmartre, just when Luther finishes his heretical translation of the Bible. Again, in 1537, the little band then constituting the Society meet at Venice, full of desire to receive the Pope's benediction on their apostolic mission to Palestine, while at Smalkdald is held the Protestant meeting, at which Luther exclaims : "May God fill you with hatred against the Papacy !"

E.

Burial Places of Saint Peter and the Early Popes.

(P. 167.)

This small cemetery on the Vatican, now become the most celebrated spot in the world, except the Sacred Places themselves, has the following stages in its history :

1. The holy Apostles, SS. Peter and Paul, were martyred, A.D. 64 or 65. The body of the former was deposited in this catacomb, the Vatican being then a wooded hill (mentioned by Horace), in the immediate neighbourhood of those gardens of Nero, where the Christians of the first persecution died an agonizing death ; being wrapped in pitched garments and so set on fire. S. Paul's body was laid in a cemetery on the Ostian Way, near the place where he was decapitated.

2. Shortly after the double martyrdom, some Oriental Christians, desirous of possessing the holy bodies, came and stole them both, and were setting out on their return to the East, when the Romans intercepted them and recovered their treasure. These facts are attested by S. Damasus and S. Gregory the Great. The relics were deposited for a time in a deserted building on the Appian Way, at the second milestone. Here S. Damasus afterwards built a *platonia* or *placoma*, (a semi-subterranean chapel, lined with plates of marble) *ad catacumbas*. From this spot, with its title of debased Latinity (κατὰ tumbas), all the Roman cemeteries were in course of time named catacombs. In the acts of S. Quirinus, this *platonia* is called "the basilica of S. Peter and S. Paul, where they sometime lay . . in the place which is called *ad catacumbas*."

3. A year and seven months afterwards, the body of S. Peter, at least, was restored to its original resting-place in the Vatican

cemetery. S. Linus was martyred eleven or twelve years after S. Peter; and his Acts state that he was buried "on the Vatican hill, near the body of S. Peter the Apostle." Eleven of the fifteen first Pontiffs had the same resting-place (Liber Pontificalis). Of S. Evaristus, especially, who was martyred under Trajan, the Roman Breviary says: "Crowned with martyrdom, he was buried near the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, in the Vatican."

4. In A.D. 218, during the pontificate of S. Callistus and the reign of Heliogabalus, the body of S. Peter was removed again to the *platonia ad catacumbas*, to avoid desecration in consequence of the extension of Nero's circus, which was made to encroach further on the Vatican hill. S. Callistus had meanwhile enlarged the *platonia;* which was afterwards called by his name; and hither he now transferred the relics, which reposed here for forty years.

5. Finally, A.D. 258, S. Sixtus II. transported S. Peter's body, and most probably a portion of that of S. Paul, back to the Vatican, where they have ever since remained. Constantine built his basilica there in 323, and the body of the Apostle was placed under the high altar. S. Leo the Great was the first Pope buried in this basilica, in 461.

F.

Ruggedness of the Northern Climate and Character.

(P. 167.)

So Petrarch:

Una parte del mondo è, che si giace
Mai sempre in ghiaccio ed ingelate nevi,
Tutta lontana dal cammin del sole.
Là, sotto giorni nubilosi e brevi,
Nemica naturalmente di pace
Nasce una gente a cui'l morir non dole.

A region of the world there lies, and drear,
Whelm'd under drifting snows, and bound with frost;
Where, all remote from the sun's bright career,
In clouds and mist, the day is briefly lost:
There dwells a race, by nature prone to war,
And e'en in death itself disdaining fear;
Let these, more pious than they yet appear,
Join, with their hardy hands, the German host

Strabo, who visited the Menapians and the Morini in the reign of Augustus, says :

"Among the Britons, the sky is heavy with rain rather than with snow ; even when it is clear [of these], some degree of fog usually prevails ; so that there are only three or four hours, towards mid-day, when the sun is visible : and this is the case also among the Morini and Menapians." Again : "All the Gauls are warlike : the nearer we get to the north and the sea, the more fearless are they. The Belgians are most so of all." (*Geogr.* lib. iv.)

An inscription at the end of the fifth century says :

> Gens fera sunt Morini, sunt intractabile vulgus : *
> Ferre jugum recusant, mutantur, et omnia mutant.
> (*Gallia Christiana*, x. p. 1528.)

Once more : regarding the Armoricans, or coast-men of Britany, and the adventurous Saxons who harrassed their shores in coracles, S. Sidonius Apollinaris says :

> Quin et Aremoricus piratam Saxona tractus
> Sperabat, cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum
> Ludus, et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo.
> (*Carm.* vii. 369.

G.

Glastonbury.

(P. 178.)

About 530 A.D., when Glastonbury was surrounded by pagan Saxons, S. David, Archbishop of Menevia, came from Wales with seven suffragans to venerate this "fons et origo totius religionis in Britannia." It is believed that, intending to proceed to a solemn dedication of the church, he was warned by a vision to abstain from doing what our Lord Himself had done already. This is referred to in a charter given to Glastonbury by King Ina, A.D. 725 : "Ecclesia vetusta, quæ est in loco qui dicitur Glasteie, quam Magnus Sacerdos et Pontifex Summus Angelorum obsequio sibi ac Perpetuæ Virgini Mariæ, beato David multis et inauditis miraculis, olim se sanctificasse inno-

* Alluding, perhaps, to the root of their ancient name, which in all likelihood they brought with them from Scythia, [Scyth, Sciut, Scot] and which appears under the various forms of Bulgaria, Volga, where the city Bolgan still speaks of them—Volcæ (Vosges) in Gallia Narbonensi, Belgians in Flanders and Britain, and Volk in Germany. *Scythici populi fere omnes Belcæ appellati*, says Pomponius Mela, writing about the beginning of the Christian era.

tuit." The same charter contains the words: "Kentwinus rex, qui Glastingei matrem sanctorum vocare solitus fuerit." Two centuries after, a charter of King Edmund (A.D. 944) decrees of it: "Celeberrima vetusta ecclesia Sanctæ Dei Genitricis . . præ cæteris *sit liberior cum terminis suis*." And another, in 946, calls it "vetusta ecclesia Beatæ Dei Genitricis in monasterio Glastingentium." These are but specimens of many similar documents.

William of Malmesbury gives us an anecdote of sufficient interest to be inserted here. "Let us make," he says, "a slight digression, in proof of the antiquity of the church of which we have already spoken. While a certain monk of Glastonbury, named Godfrey, from whose letter we have taken both this and the following chapter, was staying at S. Denis's, in the neighbourhood of Paris, one of the elder monks asked him of what nation he was, and from what house he came? He answered: A Norman monk, of a monastery in Britain called Glastingey. 'Ah,' says the other, 'is that ancient church of the Ever-Virgin Mother of Mercy still standing?' 'It is,' said he. Then [the elder monk], playfully tapping the head of Godfrey of Glastonbury, kept silence for a long while, and at length said: 'This church of our glorious martyr, and that to which you say you belong, have the same privilege and dignity: they arose at one and the same time, this in Gaul, that in Britain; they were consecrated by the Supreme High Priest; but that (in Britain) has one degree of preeminence, for it is called the Second Rome.' And while [Godfrey] was eagerly listening to his words, he who was charged with the office of entertaining the brethren parted them, against their will, to see one another no more." (W. Malmesb. ap. Gale, 294.)

H.

Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland.

(P. 183.)

Alnwick was defended by a man of a very remarkable career, Robert Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland. He seems to have undertaken the defence of the place without directions from William Rufus; and, after his success, to have grown very proud and independant in the North. Rufus went thither in person, took him, and imprisoned him in Windsor Castle. Thenceforward, the accounts of the Earl are very conflicting. He is stated by different authorities (1) to have conspired against Rufus in favour of Stephen de Albemarle, and to have lost his head in that cause; (2) to have taken part with S. Anselm, and so died a righteous death; (3) to have married a

daughter of Richard de Aquila, a Norman noble, conspiring against the King in the same year, spending thirty-four years in prison for it, and so ending his life; or, finally, (4) to have taken the Benedictine habit in Westminster Abbey, and made a holy end in religion. See Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, pp. 570, 571.

I.

The Relic of Holyrood.

(P. 184.)

To preserve this, "the Black Cross of Scotland," her youngest son, David, who reigned for thirty years on the death of his brother Alexander (the Saint's fifth son), built and endowed the Abbey of Holyrood, or Holy Cross, near Edinburgh. The Cross, however, fell into the hands of the English, after the defeat of David Bruce in 1346, and was carried by them to Durham, and offered at S. Cuthbert's shrine. Davies, the author of the *Rites and Monuments* of that church, thus describes it: "At the east end of the south alley of the quire, adjoyning to the pillar next S. Cuthbert's feretory, next the quire door on the south side, there was a most fair Rood, or Picture [Image] of our Saviour, called the Black Rood of Scotland, with the pictures [images] of S. Marye and S. John, being brought out of Holy Rood House in Scotland by King David Bruce, and was won at the Battel of Durham, with the picture of our Ladye on the one side of our Saviour, and the picture of S. John on the other side. Which Rood and Pictures were all three very richly wrought in silver, the which were all smoaked black over, being large pictures of a yard or five quarters long, and on every one of their heads a crown of pure beaten gold, of goldsmith's work, with a device or wrest to take them off or to put them on. And, on the back of the said Rood, and Picture, there was a piece of work that they were fastened unto, all adorned with fine wainscot-work, and curious painting (well befitting such costly pictures), from the midst of the pillar up to the height of the vault; which wainscot was all red, varnished over very finely, and all set forth with stars of lead, every star finely gilt over with gold."

J.

Malcolm Canmore.

(P. 190.)

Both his names are significant of the times, each in its way. "Mal-colm," like so many other names with the same prefix, denotes one who is tonsured, or wears a cowl, out of devotion

to a particular saint; in this instance, S. Columba, the great Apostle of the Scots, after whom Iona, or Hy-colm-kill (the island of the cell or church of Columba) is named. "Caen-more," again, suggests the simplicity and plain speaking of a rude age, when personal peculiarities, and even defects, were employed to designate those crowned heads to whom they belonged. This same surname, "Grosteste," was given to the celebrated Archdeacon of Lincoln at the end of the twelfth century. And so, if we extended the induction of instances, we should come across Barbarossa, William Rufus, Harold Bluetooth, Louis the Fat, Louis the Stammerer, Chilperic the Stupid, Richard Crookback, and many others.

K.

Saint Margaret's Daughters.

(P. 193.)

Queen Maud reflected her mother's virtues at the Court of England, in her love for the poor, and devotion to the sick. She founded Christchurch hospital in Aldgate, and that of S. Giles in the Fields. She was surnamed the Good, and some calendars entitle her "Saint." Her daughter Maud was first married to the Emperor Henry V., and, by a second marriage with Geoffery Count of Anjou, became Mother of Henry II. Queen Maud of England lies in Westminster Abbey, without any tomb. Weever (*Funeral Monuments*, p. 454) gives a translation of "an excellent epigram" upon her, extant among the Cottonian MSS.:

No prosperous state did make her glad,
Nor adverse chances made her sad.
If Fortune frown'd, she then did smile,
If Fortune smil'd, she fear'd the while.
If beauty tempted, she said, Nay;
No pride she took in sceptre's sway.
She, only high, herself debas'd,
A lady only fair and chaste.

He adds: "She went every day in the Lent time to this Church [the Abbey] barefoot, wearing a garment of hair: she would wash and kiss the feet of the poorest people, and give them bountiful arms." The *Britannia Sancta* gives the following beautiful anecdote: "Our historians relate, how her brother David, seeing her one day employed in washing the feet of lepers, and kissing them, asked her how she thought the King [Henry] would bear to touch those lips that had been defiled

with the corrupt manner of such ulcerous feet? To which she answered with a smile, that she preferred the Feet of the Eternal King before the lips of any mortal prince."

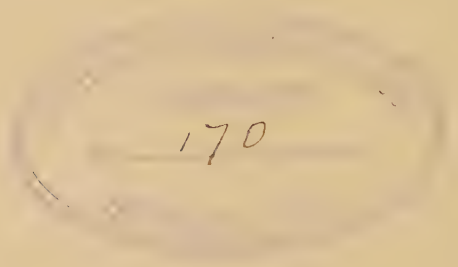
S. Margaret's second daughter, Mary, Countess of Bouillon, also left behind her a name for great piety and charity.

L.

The Pope an Institution Primitive and Essential.

(P. 211.)

Many circumstances in these our days have tended to narrow to one point the unending controversy between the Church and its gainsayers. Thoughtful minds perceive, more and more clearly, that the real alternative lies between a living, inerrant authority proclaiming eternal truth, and a mere Babel of confusion, where blind guides are leading the blind disciples who follow. At Cæsarea Philippi, our Lord proclaimed the election of the first Pope, and in the Cenacle invested him with a plenary power to teach, and to confirm all teachers in the truth. That which was born in Cæsarea lives to-day in the Vatican: for Divine words do not fall to the ground. "Thou art Cephas:" "Confirm thy brethren:" are co-extensive with 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."



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